Werner Pfeiffer (censor, villain, provocateur, experimenter): Book-Objects & Artist Books

Werner Pfeiffer

Book-Objects & Artist Books

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Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
University of Toronto
120 St George Street
Toronto / Ontario
Canada M5S 1A5
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INTRODUCTION *Contextualizing Werner Pfeiffer*

Hans Richter began his magisterial history of the Dada movement – of which he was a founding member – with the bittersweet recollection of a visit with Tristan Tzara in the early 1960s. The two aging provocateurs met in Tzara's apartment in Paris. As they parted, for the last time it turned out, Tzara called out, "Don't forget that polemics always played a big part in Dada."[1]

Indeed, a movement dedicated to the ruffling of feathers, to the absurdist distortion of the familiar and the comfortable, Dada mocked contemporary conventions and turned established artistic observance on its head. The Dada artists – Richter and Tzara of course, but also Schwitters, Arp, and, above all, Duchamp – were committed to exposing the ridiculous irrelevance of traditional forms of artistic production. These Dadaists rejected the idea of precious and stylish artworks, commodities for the aggrandizement of museums and status seekers. They took their raw materials from the quotidian world around them – found objects and "ready-mades" – and recombined them as a challenge to conventional aesthetics.

A serious and polemical enterprise, yes, but one buoyed by laughter. Richter writes, "We destroyed, we insulted, we despised – and we laughed. We laughed at everything. We laughed at ourselves just as we laughed at Emperor, King and Country, fat bellies and baby pacifiers. We took our laughter seriously…."

How else confront the juggernaut of modern materialism? Laughter was the only possible response to the horror of the Great War, with its unimaginable toll of destruction and dislocation. Even after the movement itself ran out of steam in the 1920s, the Dada reaction to the complacency, pretension and meaninglessness of modern life remained a feature of the 20th-century artistic landscape.

At this point it is perhaps worth remembering that books were among the most powerful and interesting products of nearly all the 20th-century avant garde movements. One immediately thinks of Marinetti's *Parole in libertà*, Mayakovsky's and Lissitzky's *Dlya golosa*, Cendrars's and Delaunay's

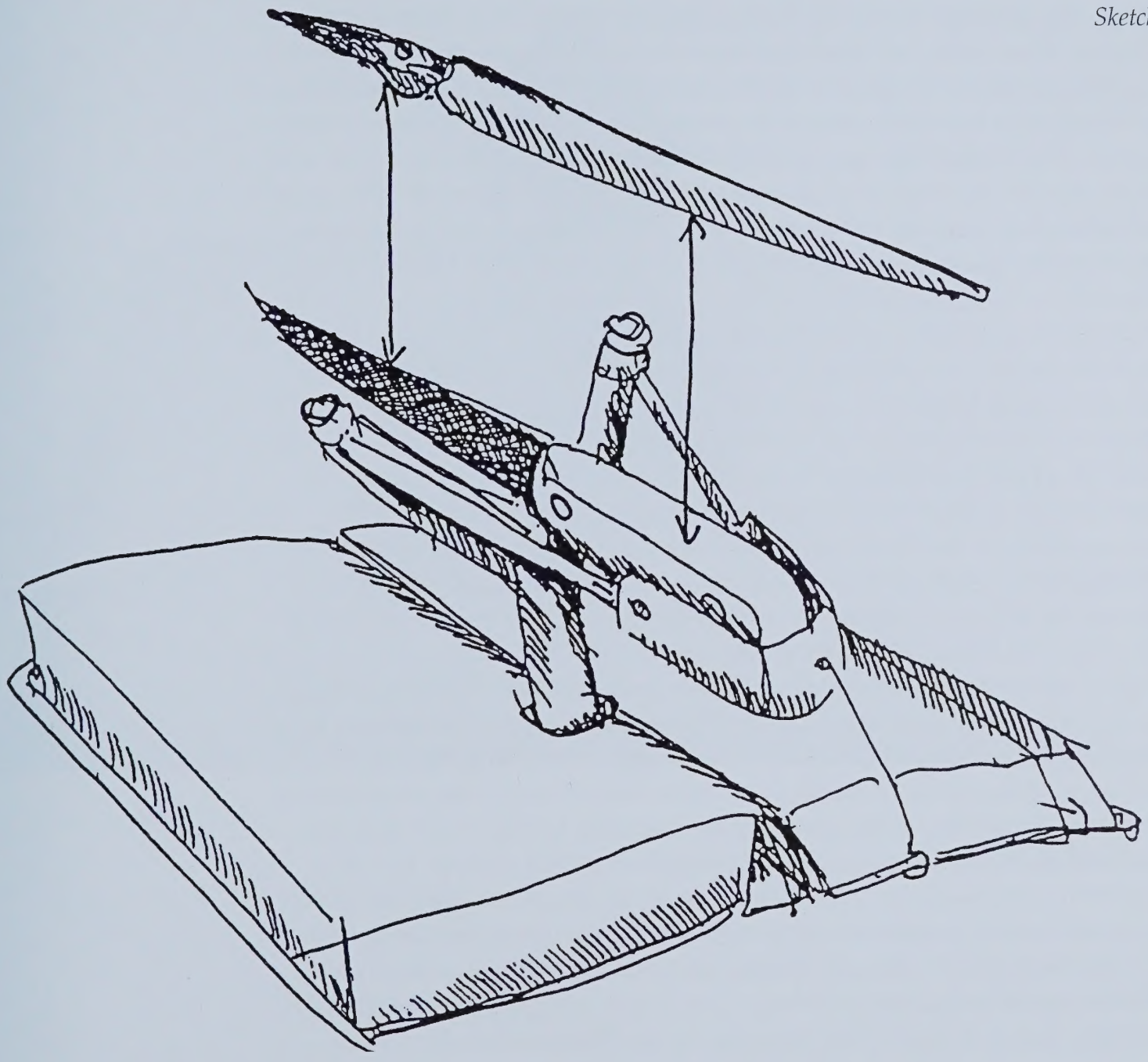
La Prose du Transsibérien, and other somewhat ephemeral, but nonetheless catalytic, innovative, and readily-circulated multiples. Most of this work was produced by artists and writers of meager means who were forced to use whatever materials they had at hand. They not only explored and redefined the aesthetics of the text, but they also engaged the concept of "the book."

Later in the century pioneers of language art – in particular the Lettrists of the 1940s and 1950s-held up the book-object as a self-conscious starting point and theoretical basis for their particular textual aesthetics: calligraphy as gesture; reading as performance. For them a codex was not merely a container for the text; it was also sculptural, archaeological, and, above all, phenomenological. It became an object with its own aura, possessing multiple cultural specificities that could be infinitely recontextualized. Taking this a step further, Guy Debord, a Lettrist and founder of the Situationalist International, developed his theory of the *livre détourné* or "deviant" book, based on the Situationist notion of *détournement*, "the reuse of preexisting artistic elements in a new ensemble."[2] For Debord and later practitioners *détournement* is a transformational act that takes its power from the alteration and juxtaposition of previously autonomous objects. Situationists claimed that "meaning" is most cogently generated by the startling recombination and cohabitation of old forms with new values: Dada revisited.

Dada revisited: this then is the artistic genealogy of Werner Pfeiffer, whose book-objects and artist books can be seen as both direct descendents of and critical responses to the artists and movements mentioned above. To be sure Pfeiffer, and others of his – and this – generation, like Buzz Spector and Wolfgang Nieblich, understand themselves to be working toward *completing* the break with main-stream aesthetics that had been initiated by Duchamp and the Dadaists.

Like their predecessors they deny the value of the art-object, which in turn obviates for them any preoccupation with "style," "quality," and "permanence." Also like their predecessors these contemporary artists are concerned with refocusing viewers' perceptions and rearranging their experience, this time, however, with a different, and perhaps more humanitarian aim.

Sketch



In the case of Werner Pfeiffer this humanizing impulse may be partially understood in terms of his childhood experience of a world at war (he was born in Germany in 1937) and then, perhaps even more poignantly, of mankind literally struggling to emerge from the rubble. Indeed, we might sense in Werner Pfeiffer's complete *oeuvre* – from assemblages and dimensional prints to architectonic paintings and book-objects – an artist's attempt to rebuild a shattered world: art as building, art as construction. Even his earliest training as a typographer (one who assembles countless tiny pieces of metal into a perfect and explicit creation) fits – or perhaps originally set – that pattern.

From the formal point of view, it is significant that Pfeiffer himself refers to his work as "Systems Art." Beyond their conceptual foundations, his book-objects speak loudly of machines and their myriad components, of assembly and prefabrication; it's hard to look at these artworks without imagining a man with tools in his hands behind them. And there are other systems at play, too: throughout this exhibition the viewer will be lured into Pfeiffer's distinctive topographies, for as much as his work is about constructing new architectures, it is also about mapping new landscapes, new terrains. And the word "play" above reminds me that there is a lot of that, too, and Dadaist laughter: the artist as architect, engineer, cartographer, and polemicist.

On the other hand, in his artist books Pfeiffer explores a different genre, floating freely between the two poles of traditional fine printing and conceptual bookworks, combining elements from both ends of the spectrum in varying degrees and for varying purposes. Here he explores that "hazy zone of activity" (to quote Johanna Drucker), that fertile middle ground of the spectrum, where images and text confront each other in a new way and demand an entirely different type of response from the reader. Here we have books as "visual literature," in which language and image are used and juxtaposed in a way that extends and enhances the meaning of both. Here conceptual ideas re-invigorate the traditional object. Pfeiffer's artist books are accretionary, not reductive, they take as raw materials features from both ends of the book arts spectrum and realign them; each

Funnel

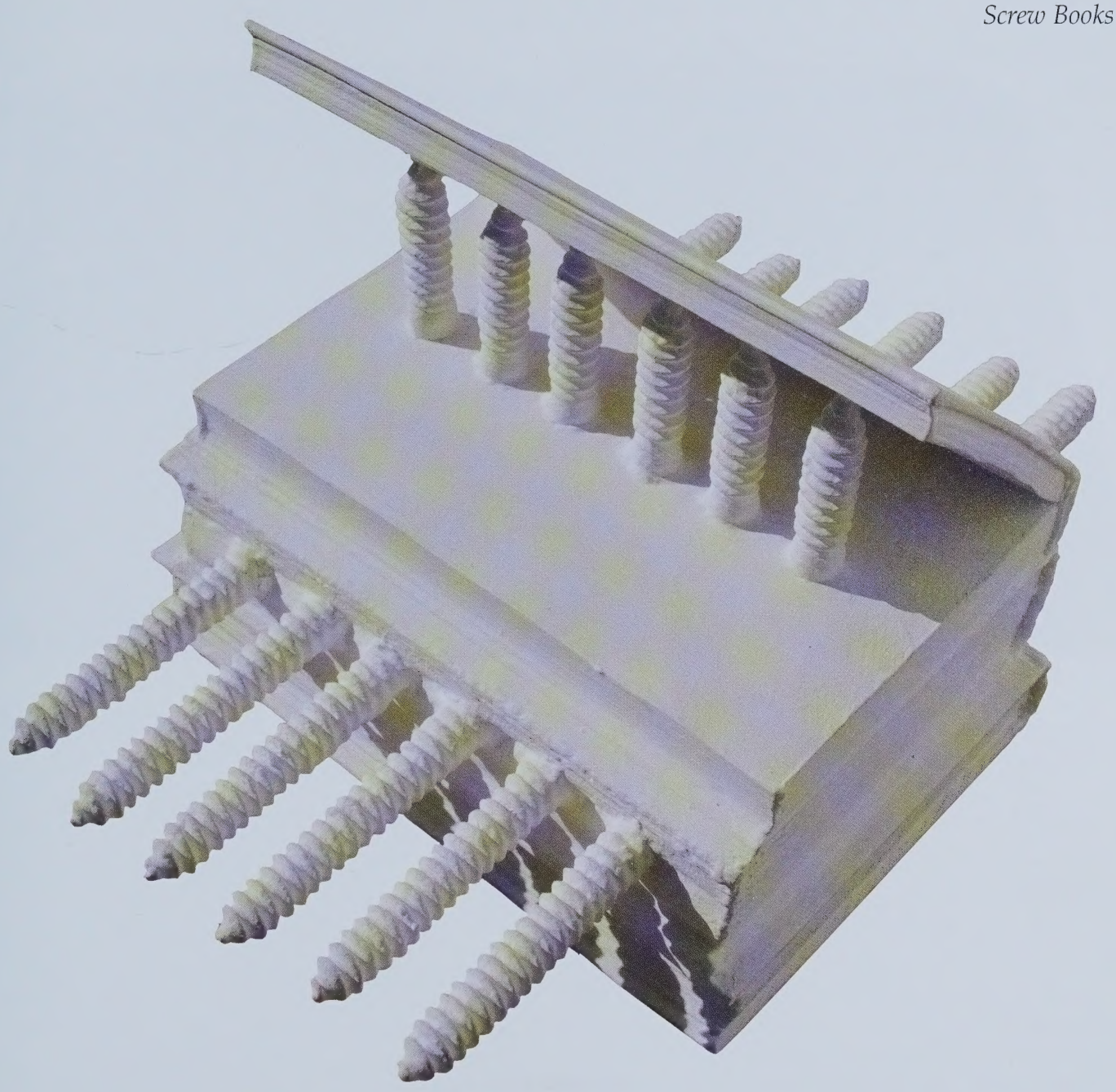
particular work is a crucible where a new synthesis of visual and verbal elements is forged. In the artist books (as opposed to his book-objects) Pfeiffer uses the codex form as an *organizing structure*; it becomes a sequence of spaces, a sequence of moments: sometimes these moments are filled with image, or with language, or with images of language. Meta-linguistic expressions like this are very rich and multi-valenced, indeed, and they require a deeper level of participation from the reader. But the visitor to this exhibition will soon discover that the effort is well worth it.

• • •

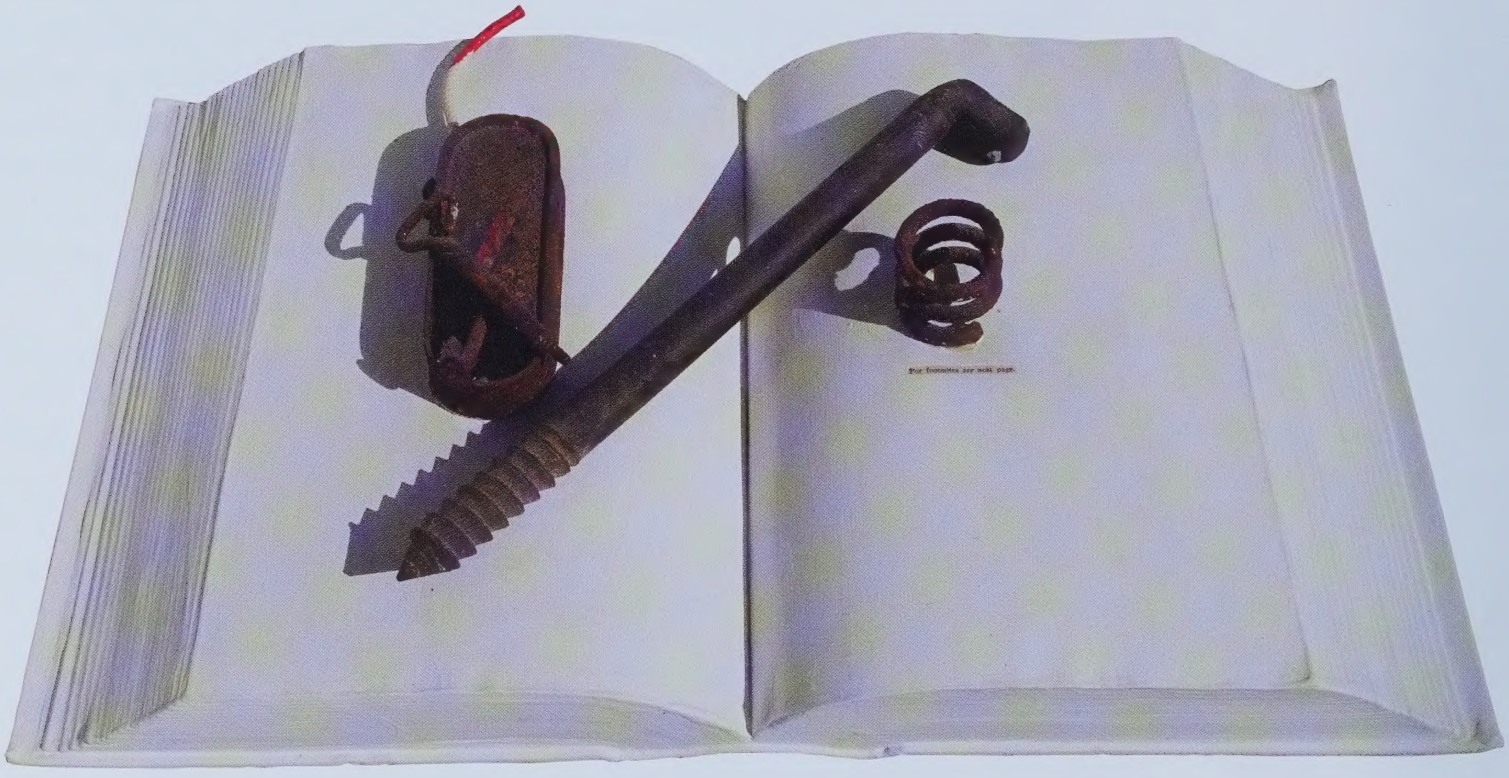
This catalogue accompanies the first traveling exhibition of the artist books and book-objects of Werner Pfeiffer. My collaborators on this project are Lynne Farrington, Curator of Printed Books, Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Pennsylvania; Katherine Reagan, Curator of Rare Books & Manuscripts and Assistant Director for Collections at Cornell University; and Richard Landon, Director of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library at the University of Toronto. We all hope that the experience of these compelling artworks will delight the eye and mind, provide rich food for thought, and ruffle a few feathers as well.

Martin Antonetti
Curator of Rare Books
Smith College

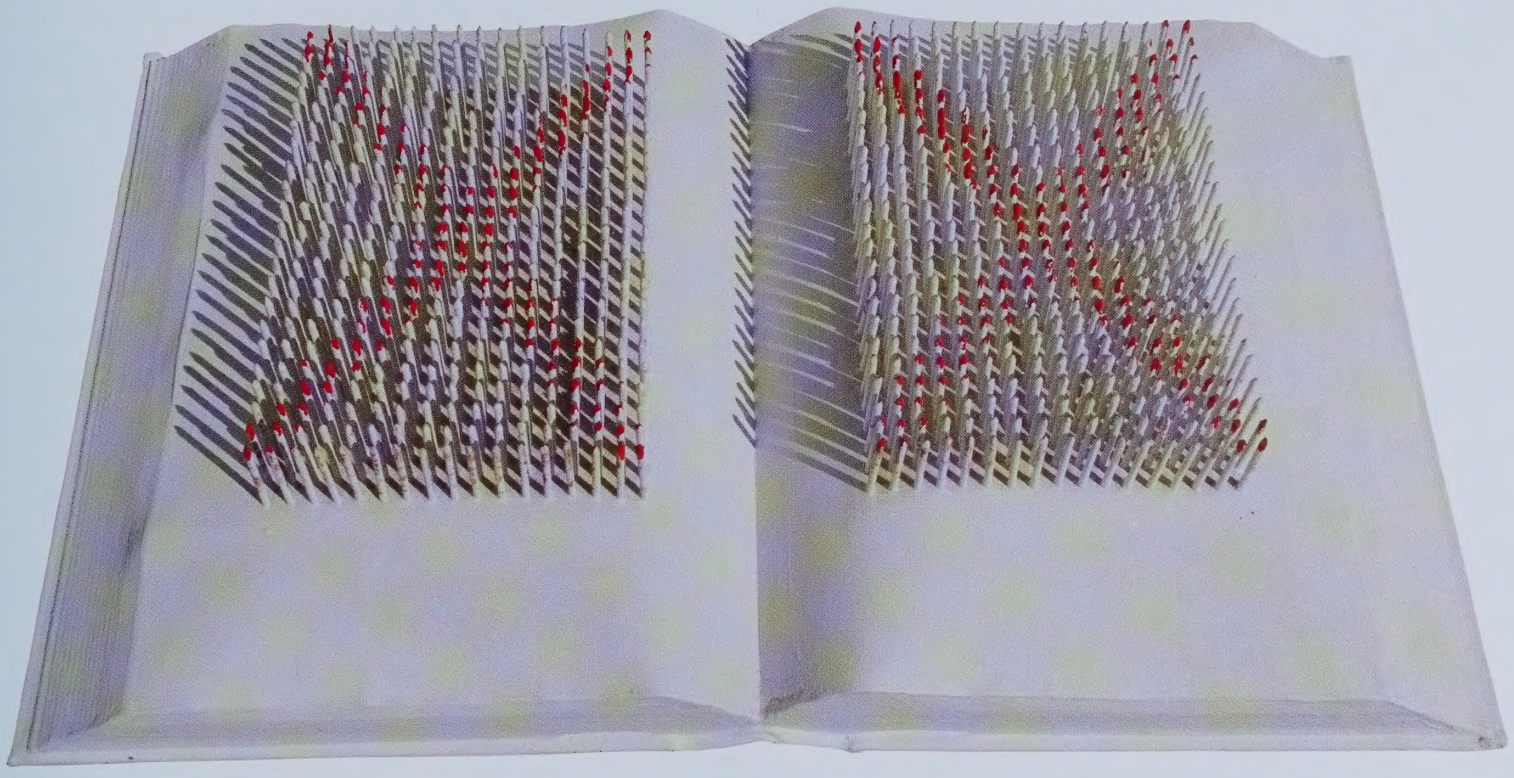
[1] Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964), p. 7.
[2] quoted by Thomas A. Vogler, "When a Book is Not a Book," in Jerome Rothenberg and Steven Clay (eds.) *A Book of the Book: Some Works & Projections About the Book and Writing* (New York: Granary Books, 2000), p. 456.



Screw Books # 3



Foot Notes



Censored Nail Book

Difficult Chapter

BOOK OBJECTS Because I grew up in a country during an era of political turmoil and savagery notably ushered in by public book burnings, it is incongruous for me to think of cutting up books. My natural inclination is to save books rather than to destroy them. That impression does not seem to hold true if one looks at my gagged and tormented book-objects. However, at times one has to play devil's advocate to make a point. With all this said, I must confess that I do cherish books.

Early in my childhood the slender volumes of picture books were my sanctuary. If nothing else they offered an escape from the harsh realities of a disintegrating world. The trauma of World War II and its tumultuous aftermath had left little intact. The few classics of children's literature which had survived political scrutiny became my companions. The intimacy and seclusion they could offer and the freedom of the world between the printed pages left an indelible impression.

With the passage of time I found myself ever more seduced by books, captivated by their content. But I became equally intrigued by their structure, their making, their décor, their design, their history, their politics. Countless books with their many aspects touch all of our lives. They are a source of richness to all who have found wisdom between their covers. However, the inherent status of a published book, which seems to bestow "authority" to the printed word, easily makes it an object of abuse. Quite often books are exploited for expedience, to impose, to misguide and to manipulate. On the other hand the power of a book to spread free and unbridled thought renders it equally vulnerable.

This is particularly true when political or religious fanatics are troubled by challenges to their orthodox rhetoric. Almost from the time they have existed books and their authors have been the target of self-righteous "moral" guardians. Powerful institutions have managed with impunity, now and in the past, to expunge expressions contrary to their own beliefs. These measures are commonly cloaked in the parlance of "protecting the public." In truth it is nothing but censorship.

Quite early in life I was confronted with this doubletalk. The first schoolbooks I can remember, leftovers from the previous regime, were heavily "edited." They were books with words and sentences blackened out. Chapters were deleted; entire pages were missing. This was information declared unsuitable for a post-war generation, a generation who six months earlier had been practically obliterated by the events now deemed unfit to be read about. Part of what they had lived through, their own history, had been blocked out, hidden behind those black marks.

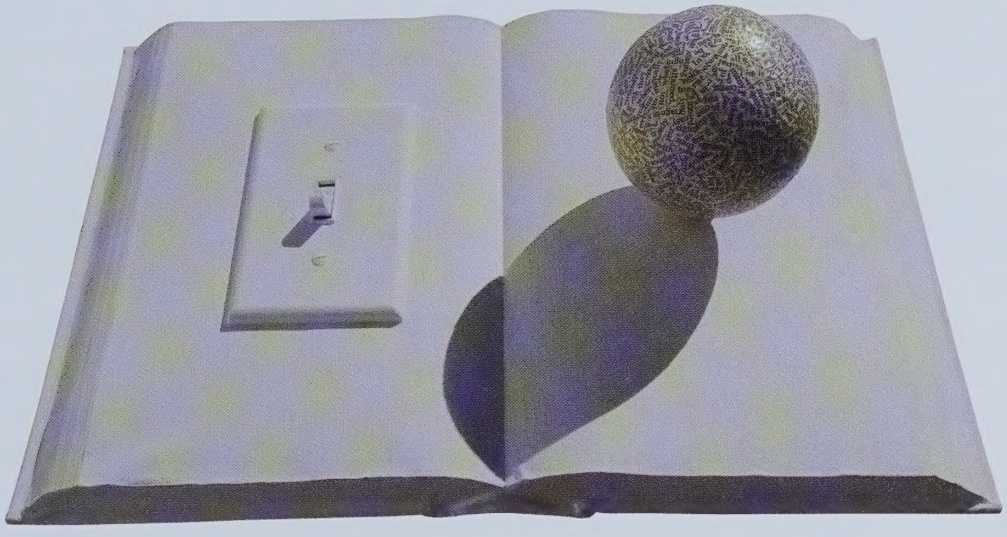
Measured by the perceived fears an innocently bound codex seems capable of instilling, the book is one of the most powerful weapons ever invented. And yet we find ourselves at a threshold where its power and influence seem to be waning.

At this juncture as we are turning a critical page in our cultural evolution, we must survey the staggering new inventory of available resources. In doing so we are putting a renewed spotlight on the book, this time, however, not as an instrument of social expansion and intellectual advancement, but as a symbol of a fading tradition. As in the past, we find at the core of our current socio-political realignment the process of communication. We deal again with the question of how to replicate language economically. The technical solution for this issue forms once more the pivotal hinge of change.

The new cultural footprint is a set of digits and their application, made possible by the microchip and the speed of electricity. By reducing our intricate communications formula into principally two states, we have drastically economized. On/off, plus/minus, positive/negative, the electronic yin and yang. Brilliant in its simplicity!

Application of this logic has already expanded far outside the mechanism of linguistic interpretation. Sound, movement, imagery, complex research tasks, and more, are enhanced and made possible by this simple code. The new frontier is projecting a technological and cultural revolution beyond our wildest dreams. Individual and territorial boundaries seem no longer to matter.

Knotty Story # 2



Morality Switch

Litterary Salvo

Massive digital networks operate around the clock, around the globe, with a precision that is intimidating. They are ever more powerful and faster, but also exceedingly vulnerable.

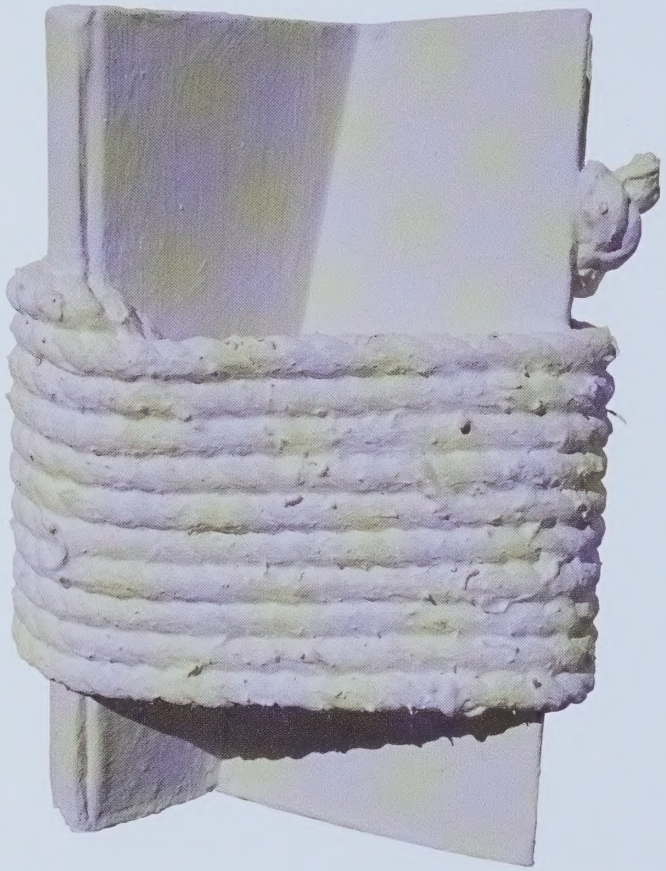
Against this relentless electronic exposure the intimacy of the book stands in sharp contrast. It is deliberately low-tech, cumbersome and slow. But it has retained its singular advantage. It is private. It challenges the imagination.

In its elemental simplicity it is a conversation between author and reader; "... it is a dialogue of minds," as John Updike wrote in one of his recent responses to the growing challenges put forth about books. But as long as we remember that books are still there for us to explore, we hope that we will have that choice.

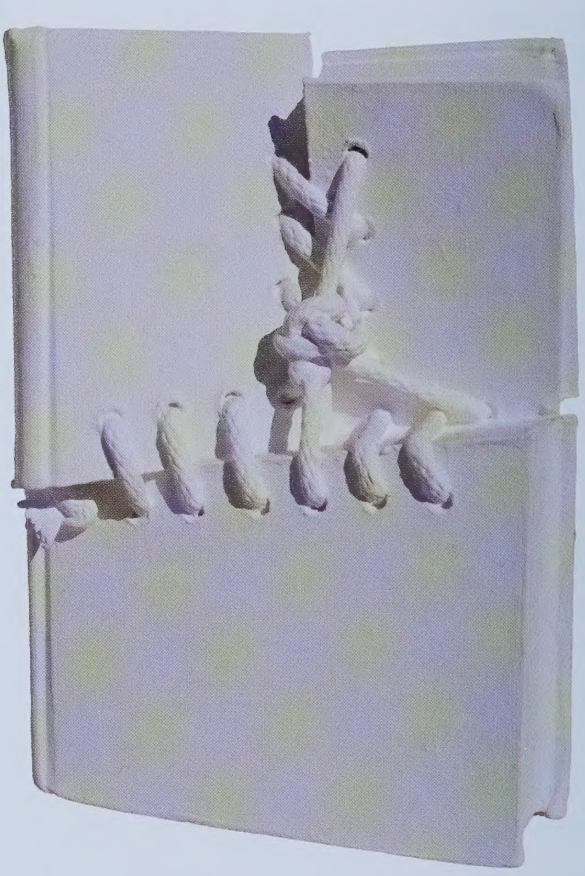
My book-objects have their origin partly in this ambiguous realm, a period of change as radical as it is dramatic. Superimposed over this perceived uncertainty is my personal concern about censorship.

By making books which are deliberately mute I try to raise questions. Words are lost; they are no longer important. The books take on new forms; they become provocative statements. No longer instruments for reading they become sculptures, they become Book-Objects. Willfully altered, they are discharged of their original purpose and turned into relics. But equally important, they are turned into symbolic markers to be visited by future generations.

The objects I create are made with real books. They are not casts, nor are they sculpted imitations. At its core each piece has bound, printed pages. Glued together and painstakingly covered with gesso, they are silenced and sealed for good. I practice this destruction, this obvious censorship, simply as metaphor. It is to visualize, to demonstrate, to provoke. For these acts of violence are not about the damage done to stacks of paper, to books. The objects are about the harm inflicted on the human spirit. The ropes, the nails, the clamps, the hooks and knifes are real as well. They are symbols of pain, of torture, of suppression which are inevitably brought on by the censor's act.



Rope Book # 12



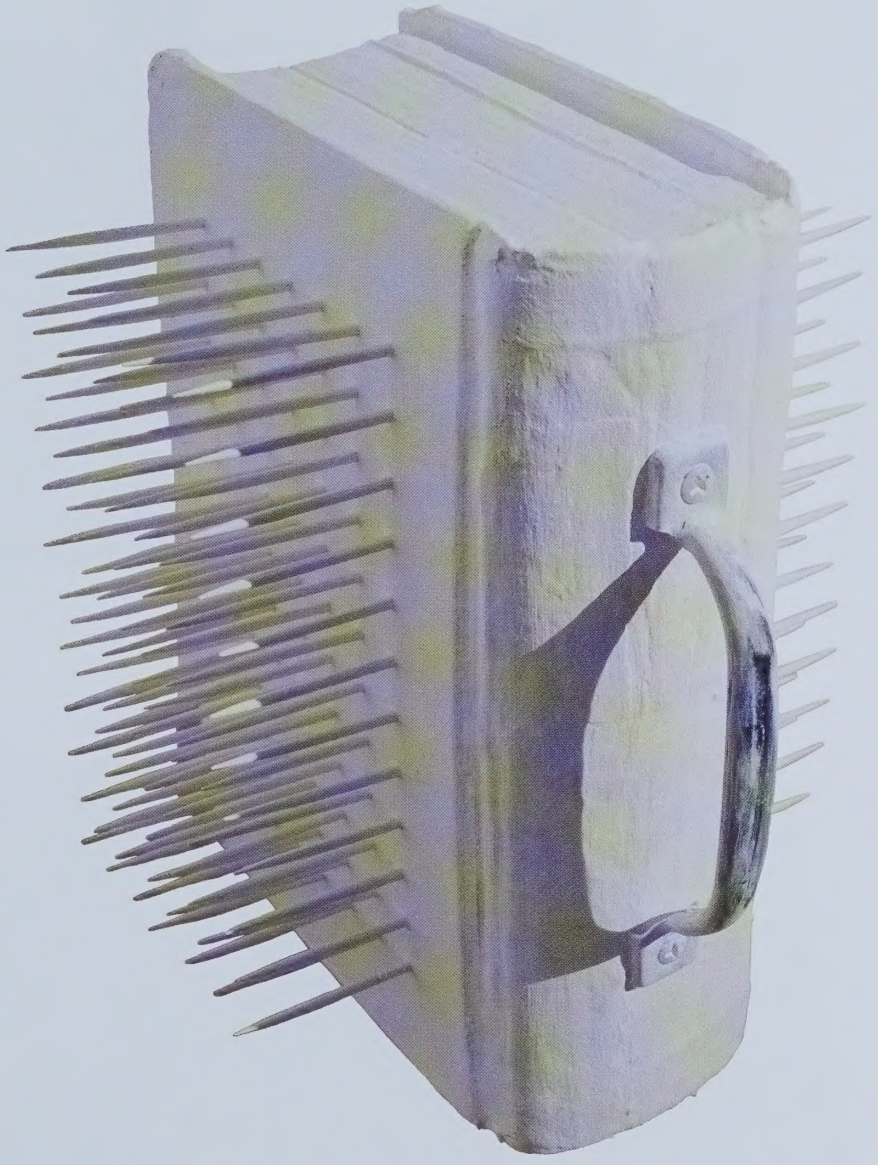
Rope Book # 4

Rope Book # 11

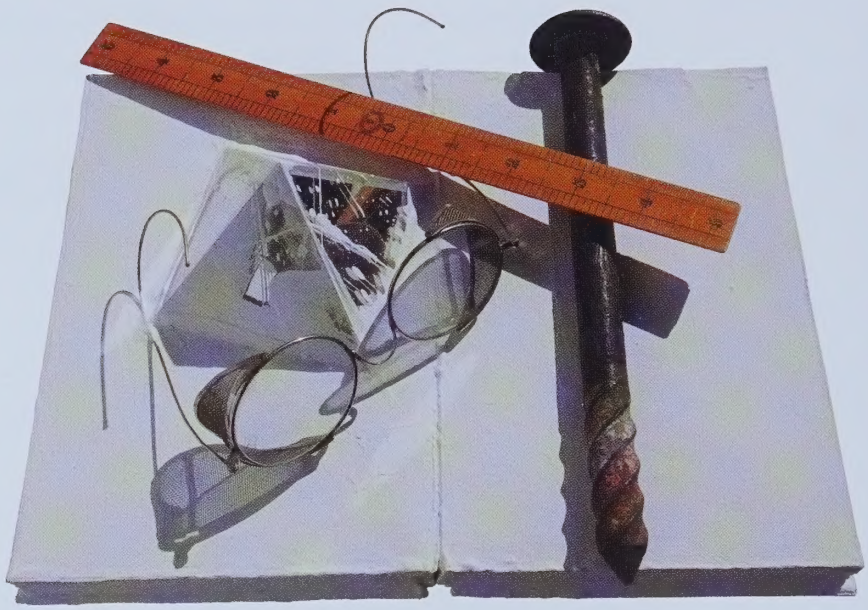
Rope Book # 8

How I arrive at a specific piece of work is often inexplicable. Sometimes ideas surface mysteriously. Sometimes they are provoked by events. Other times it is the act of working itself which generates a new thought. It might be a specific expression, a word or a piece of material, which will reveal a new direction. Or it can simply be the shape of a book, its title or its physical condition, which triggers my curiosity. Probing, testing and investigating a given vocabulary will inevitably lead to new discoveries.

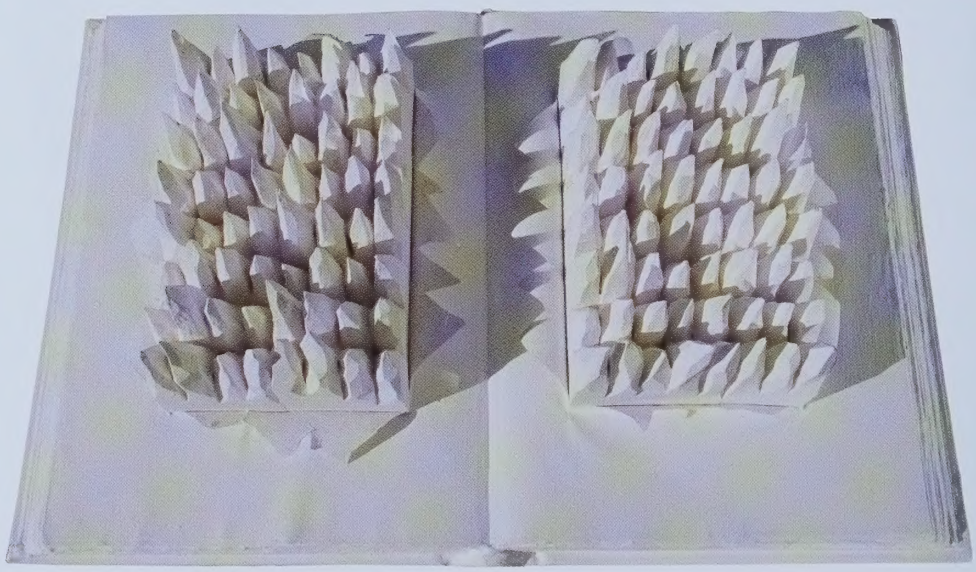
W. P.



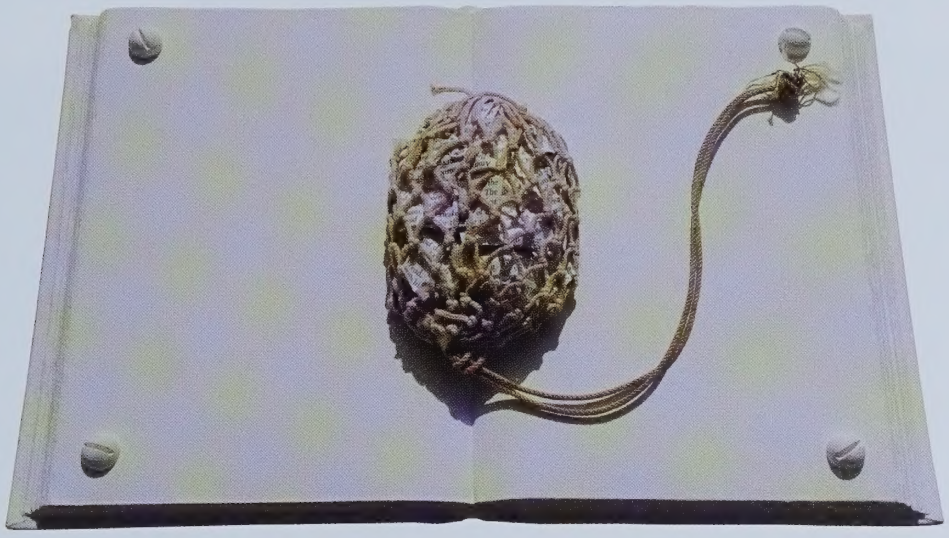
Difficult to Fit



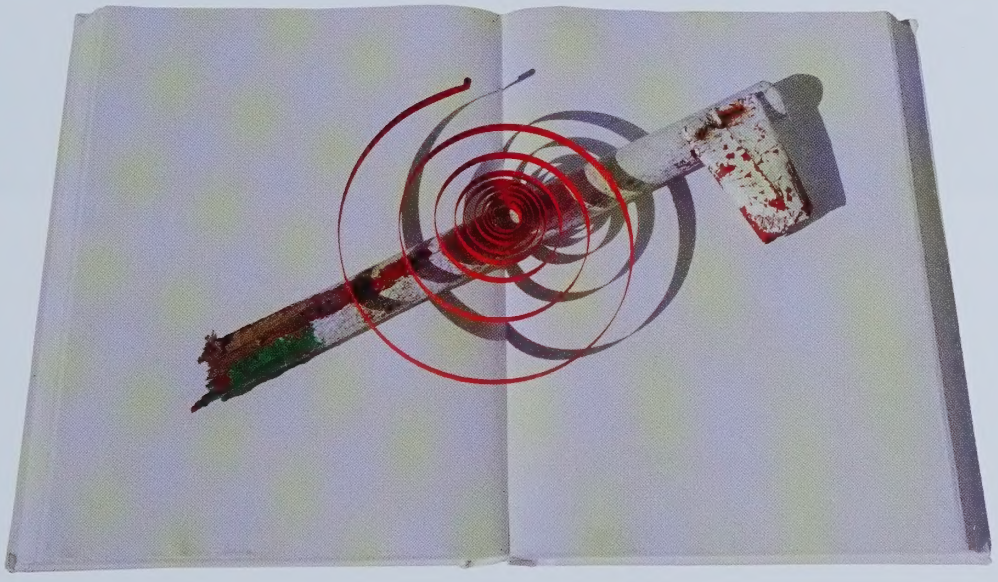
Lost Measure



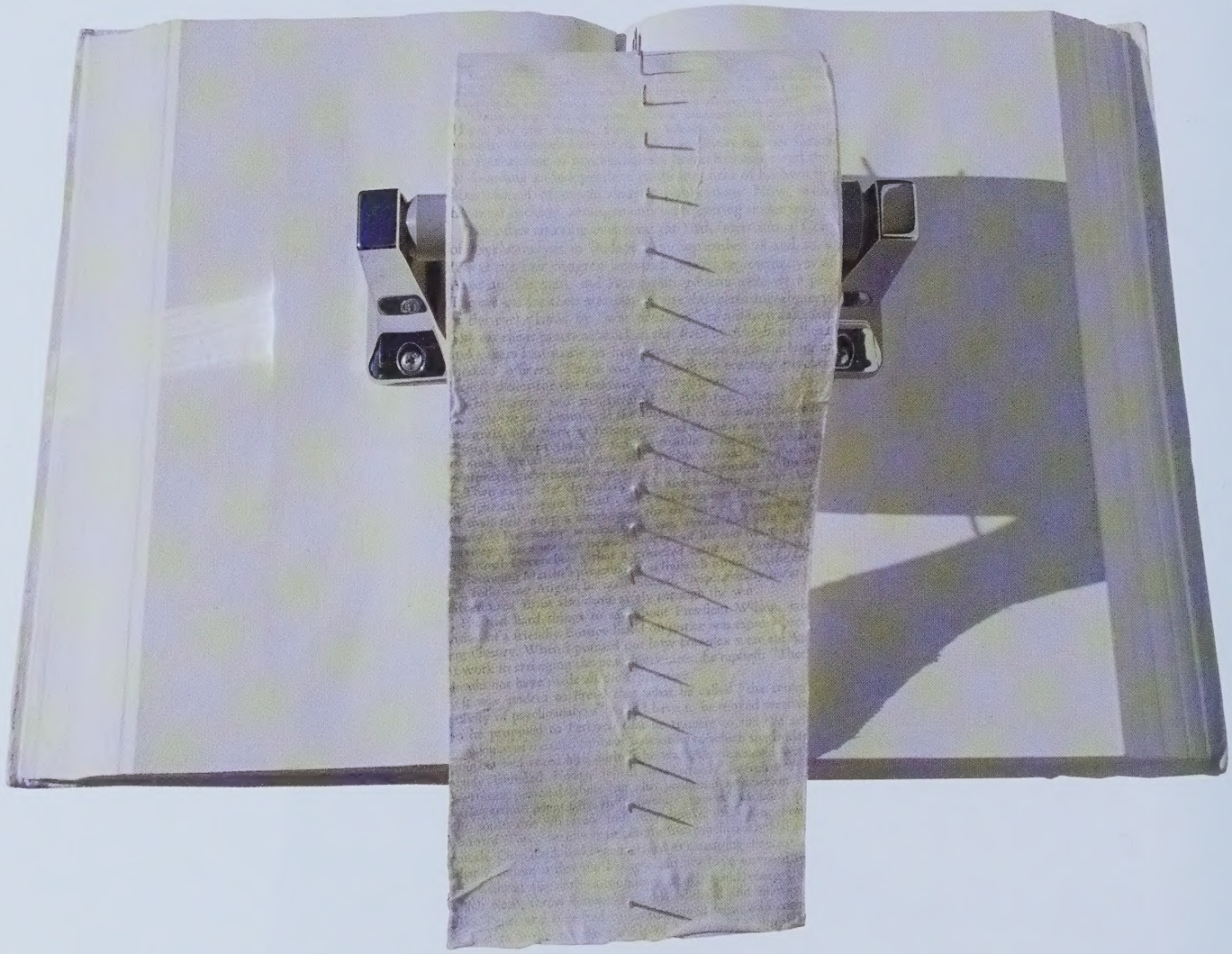
Breakthrough



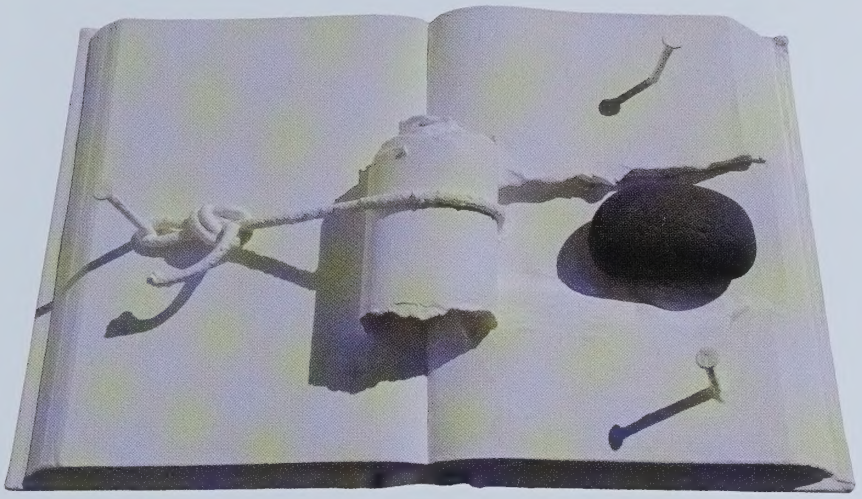
Bait



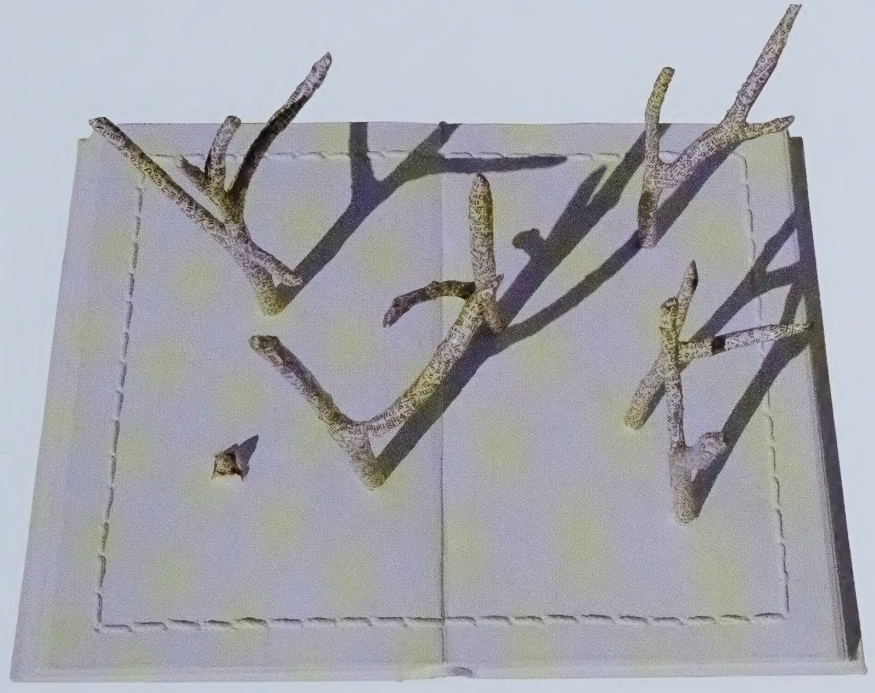
Broken Markers



Writers Revenge

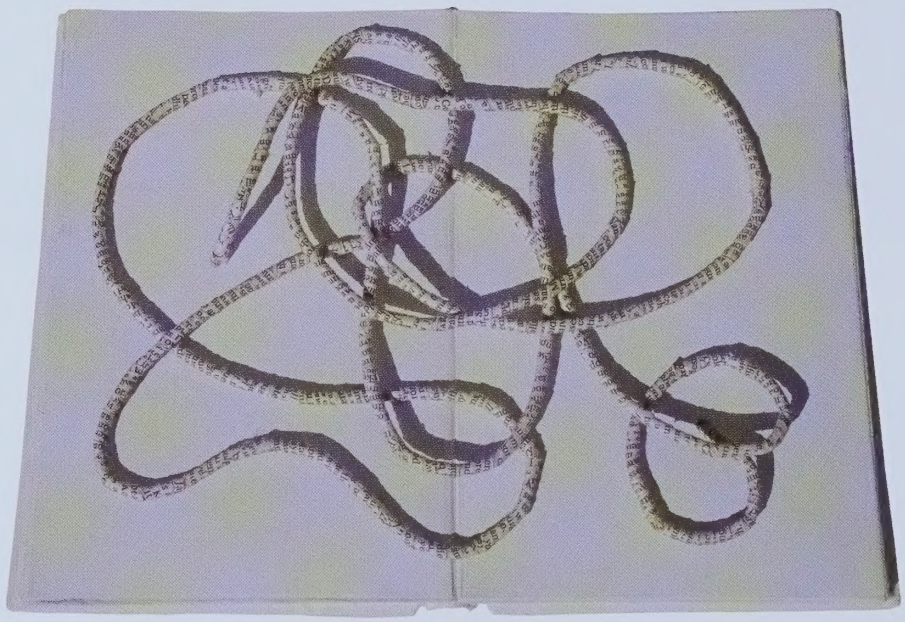


Stone Book # 1

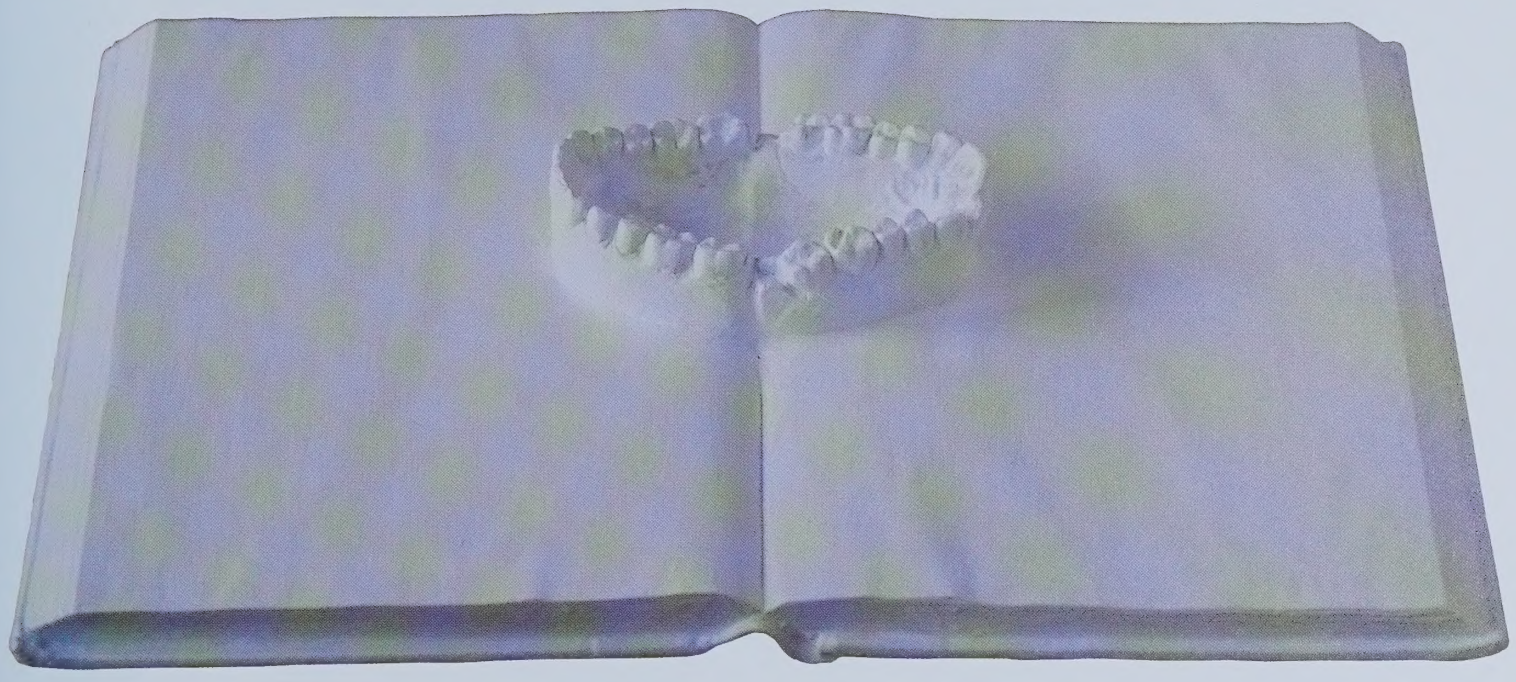


You Can't Keept it Down

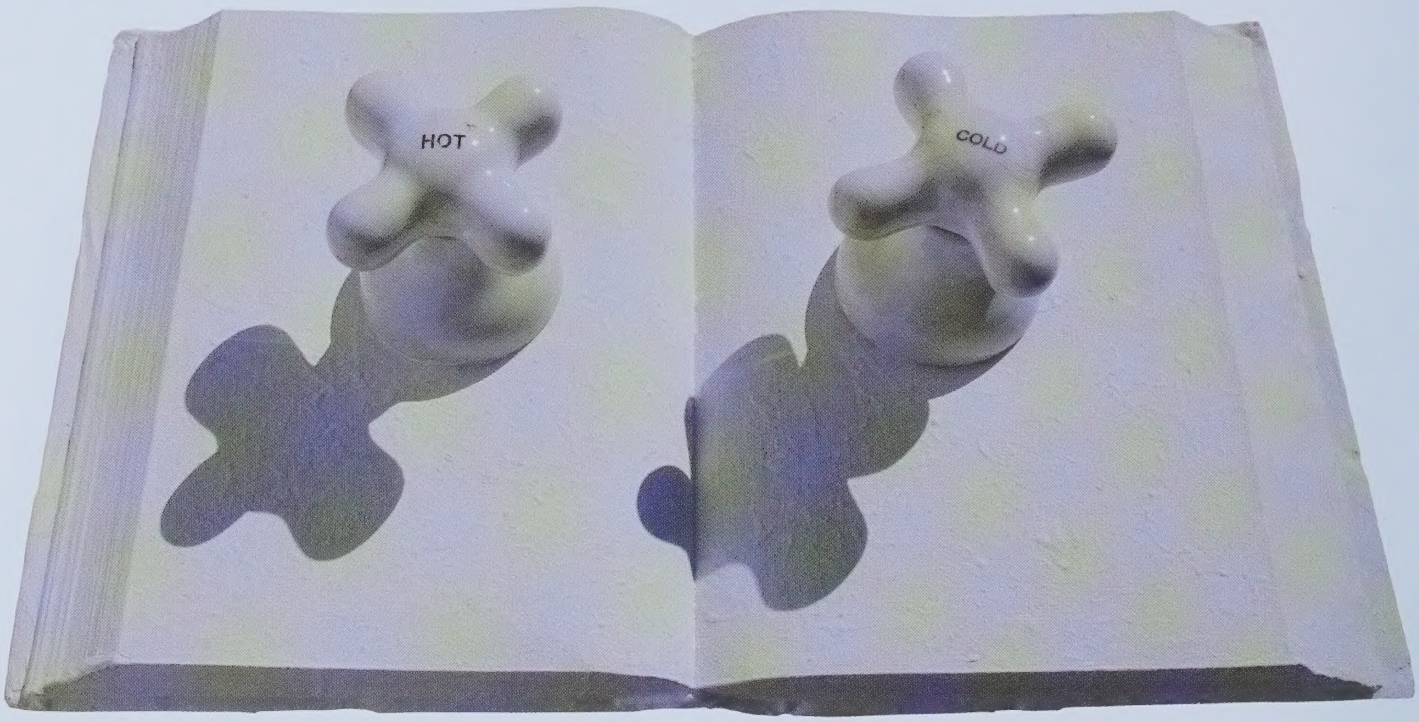
Stainless Steel



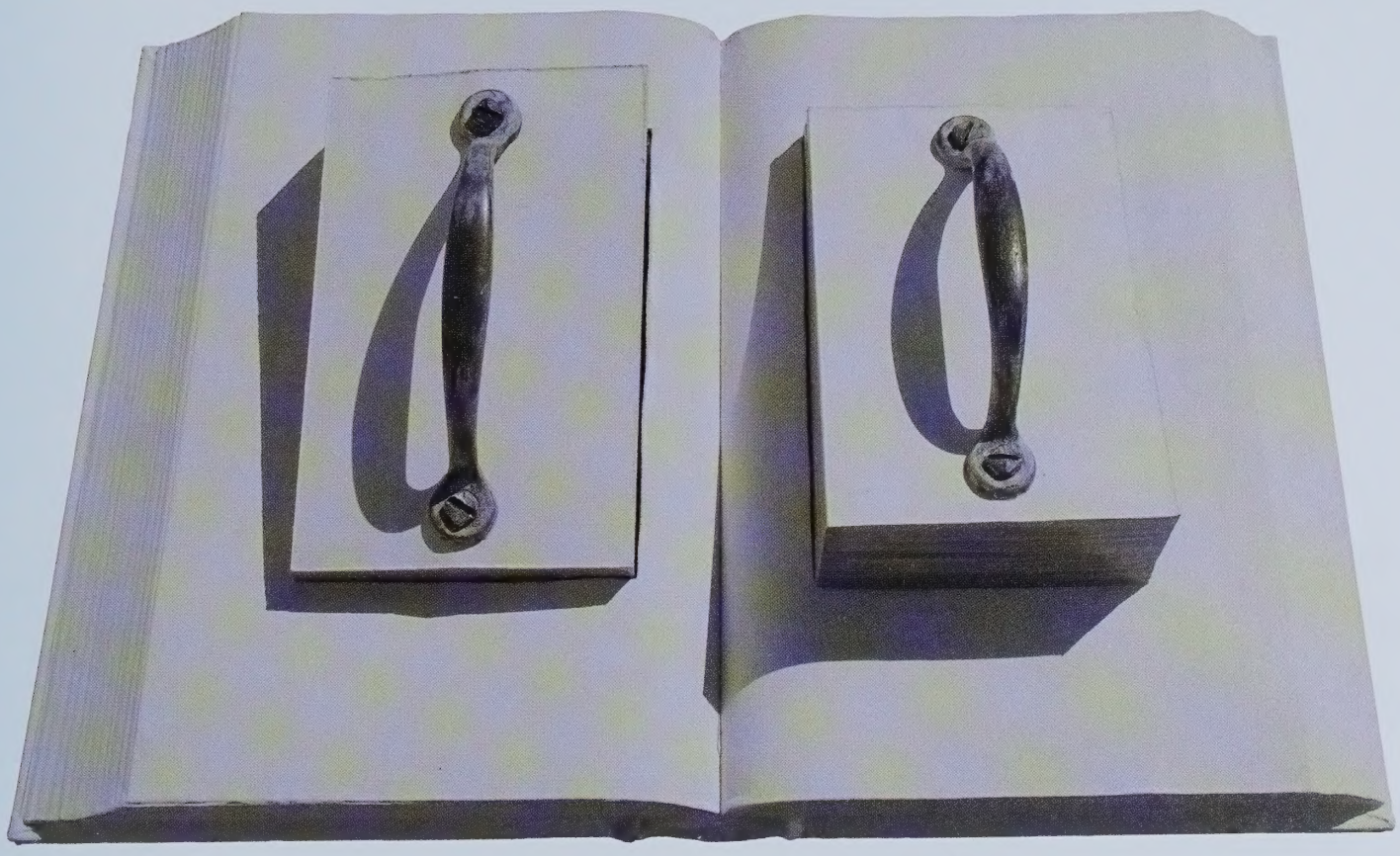
Story Line



Book with Bite

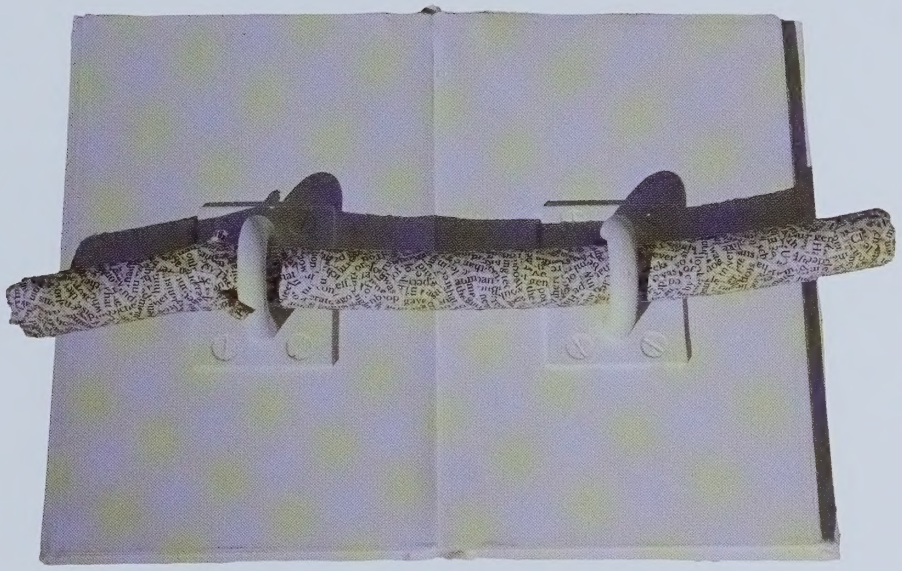


Hot & Cold



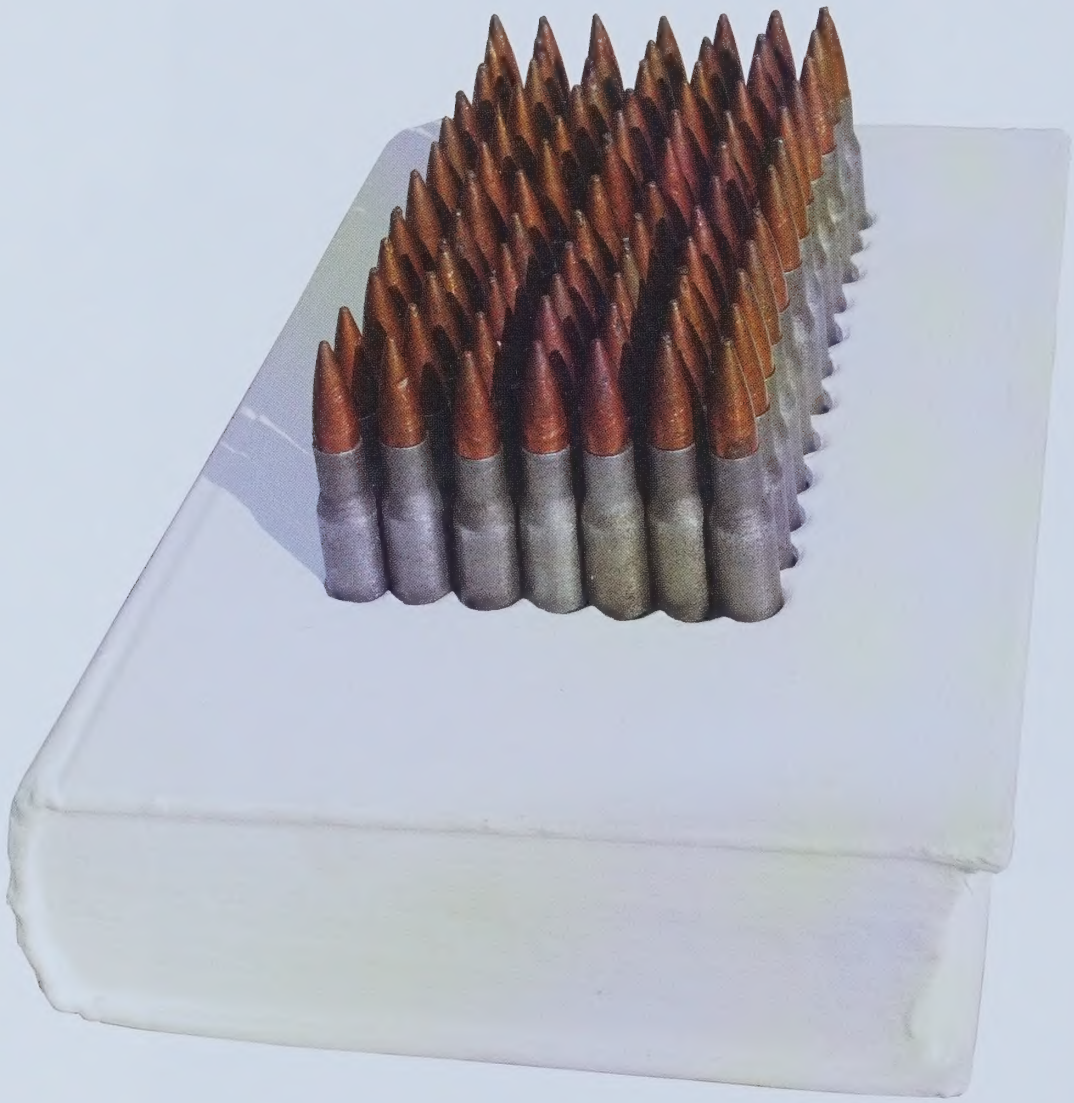
Removing the Evidence

Sprouting Immorality

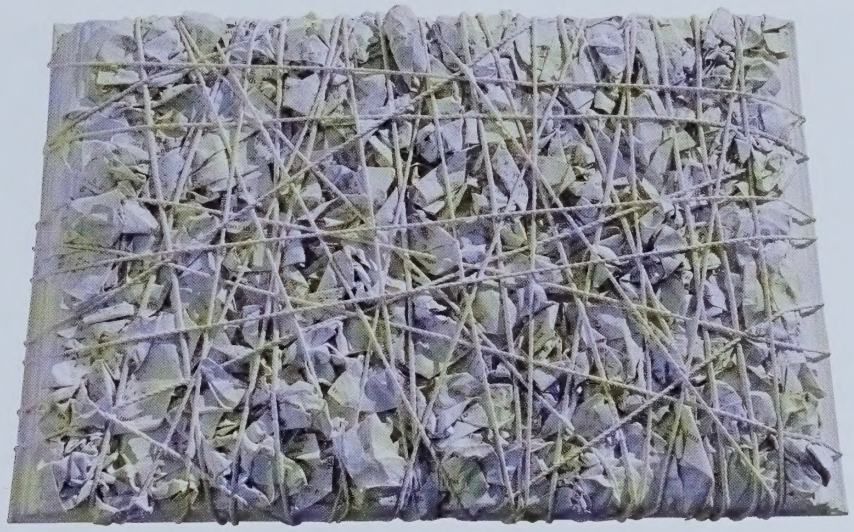


Bolted Shut

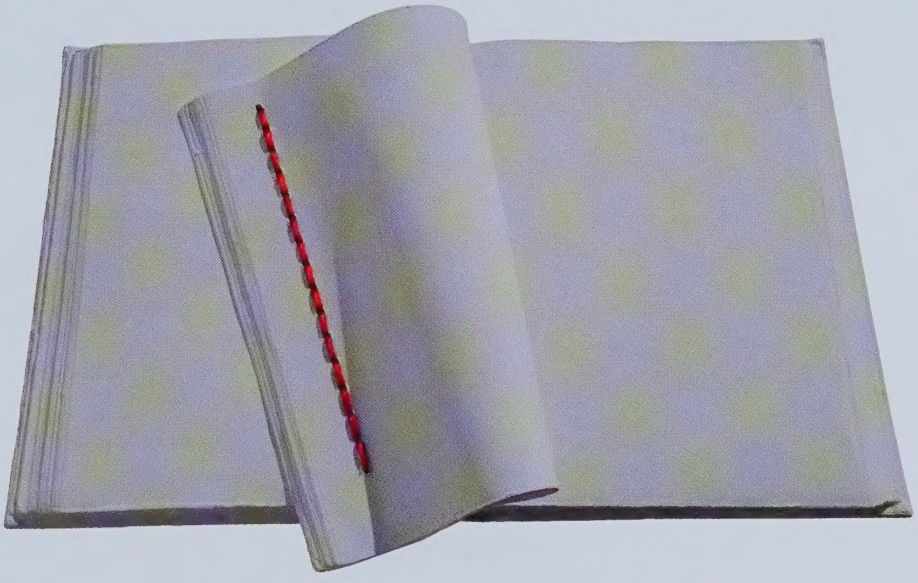
Flushed



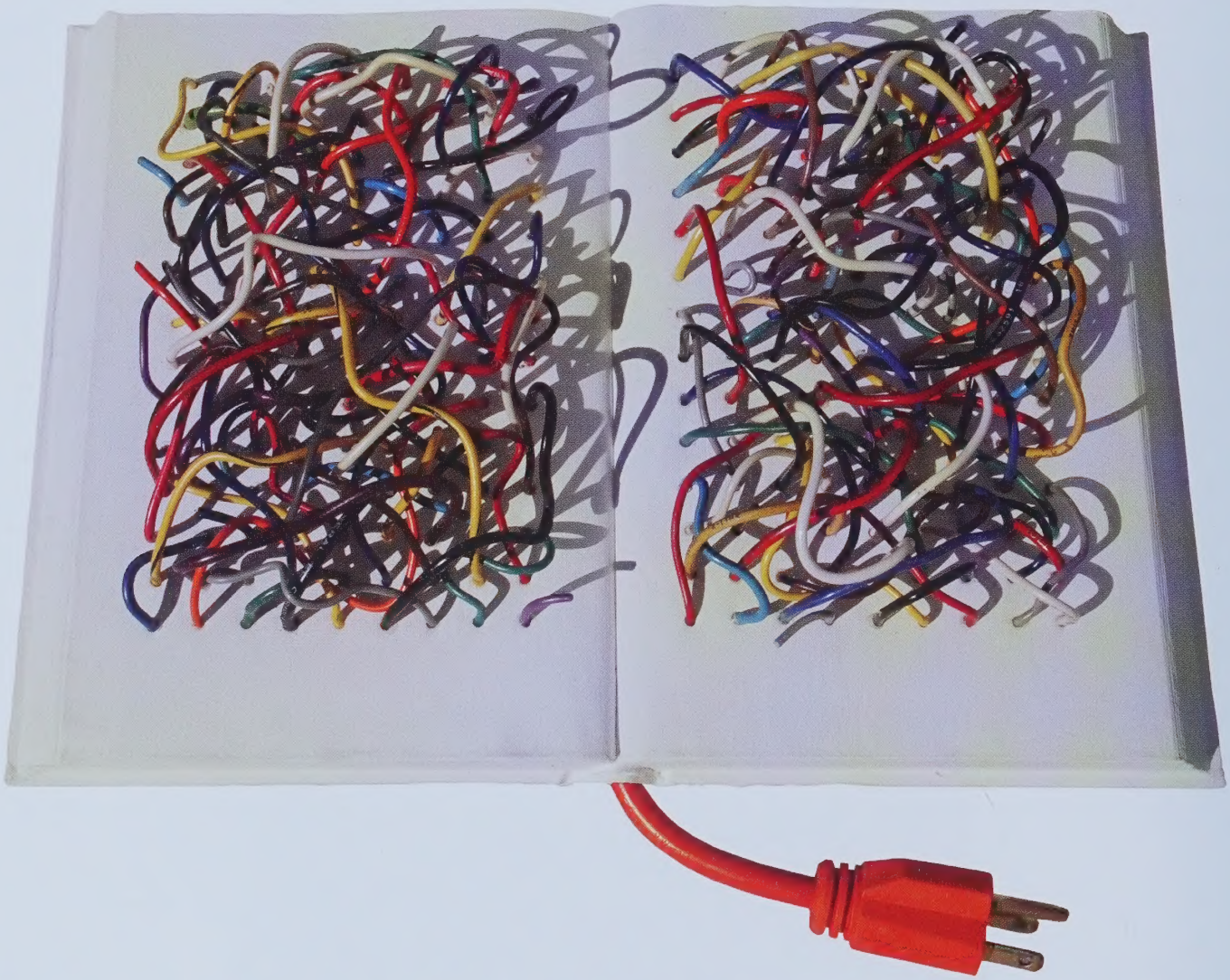
Explosive Subject



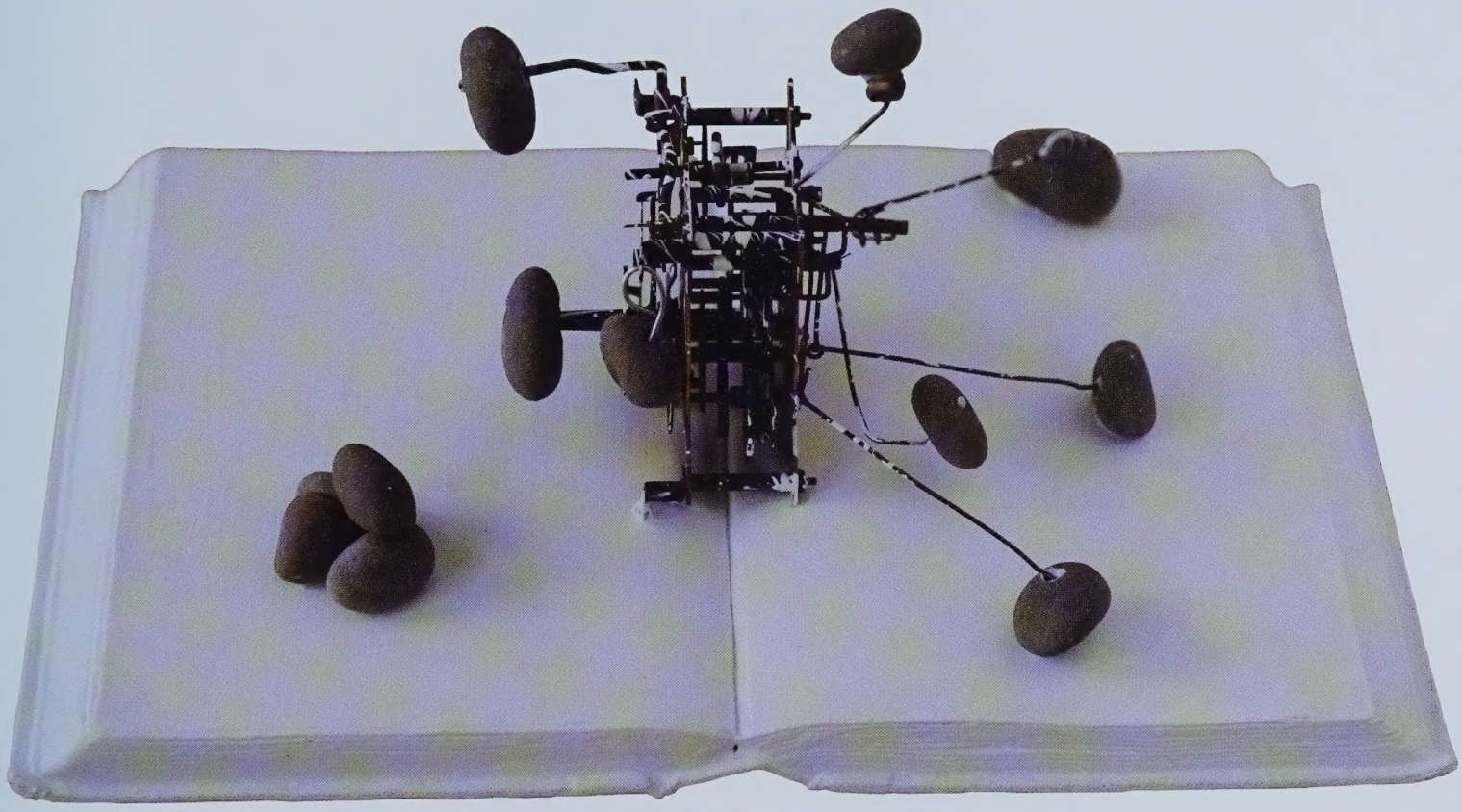
Strung out



Sewn Up

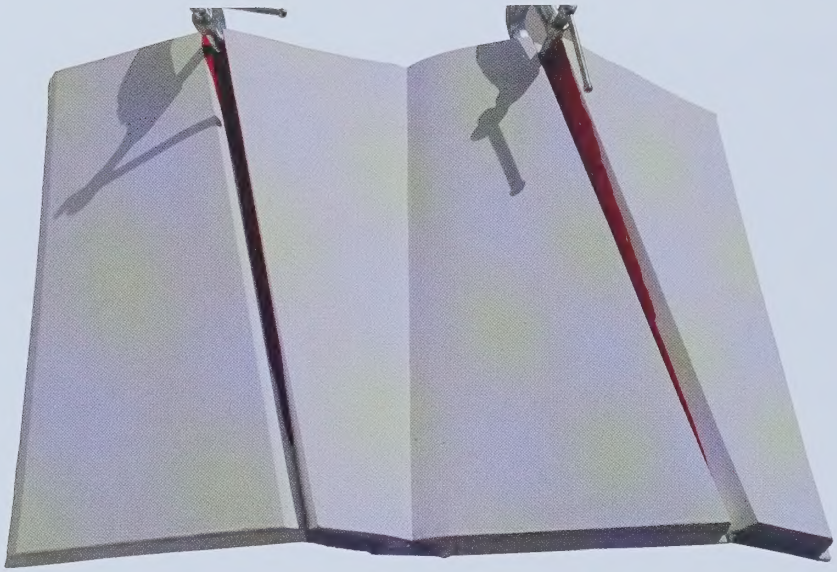


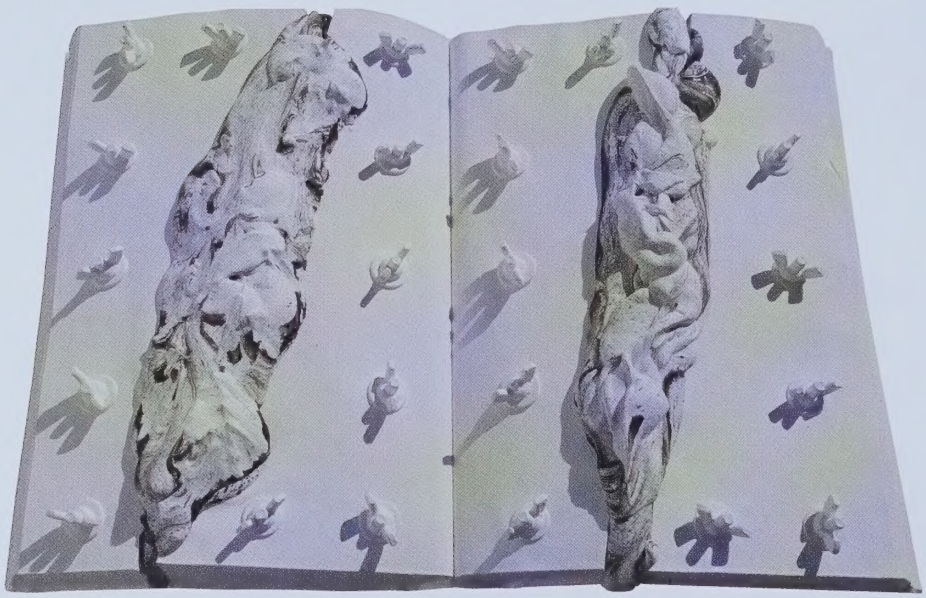
The Original Chip



Attack Machine

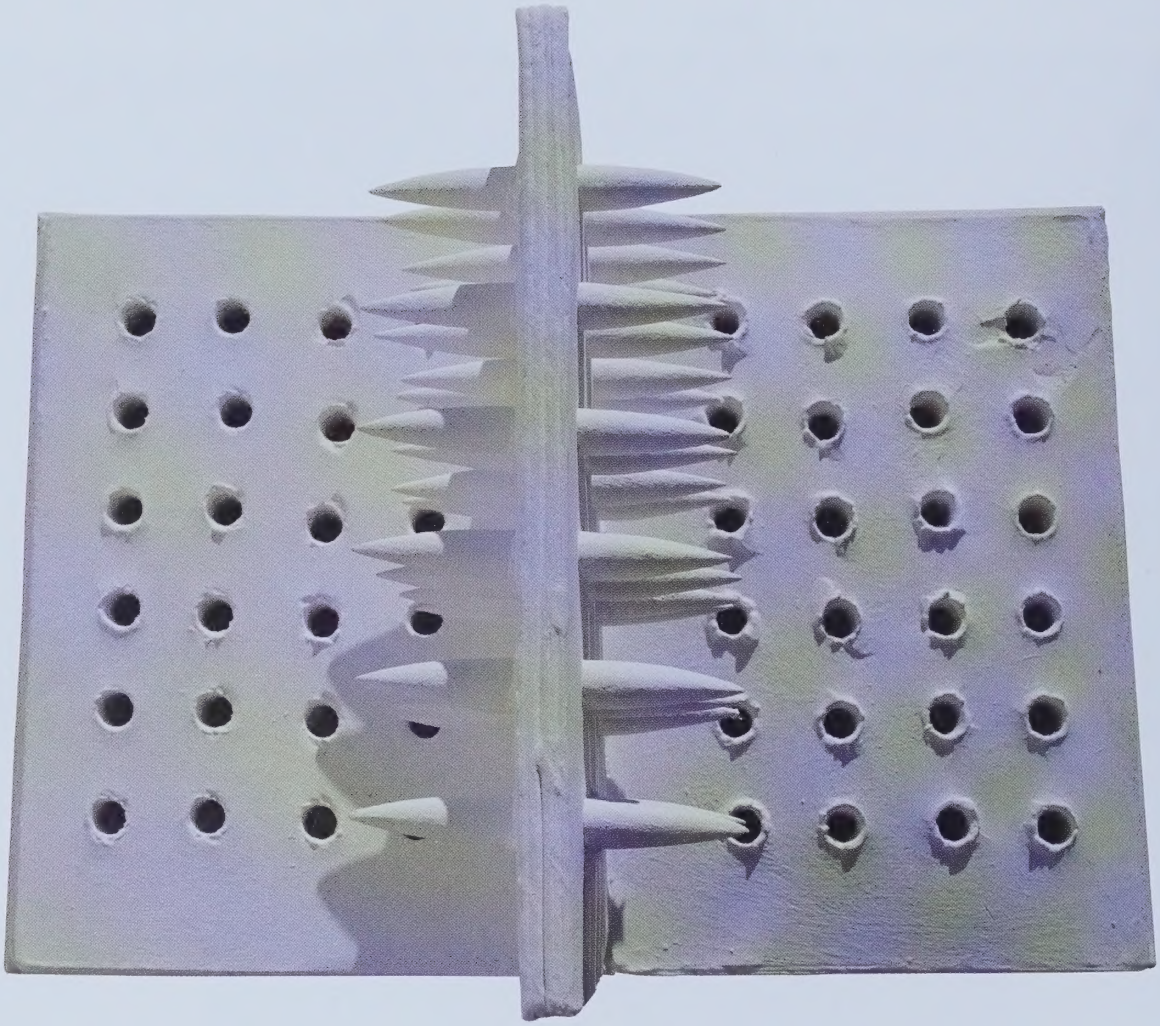
Forcing the Issue





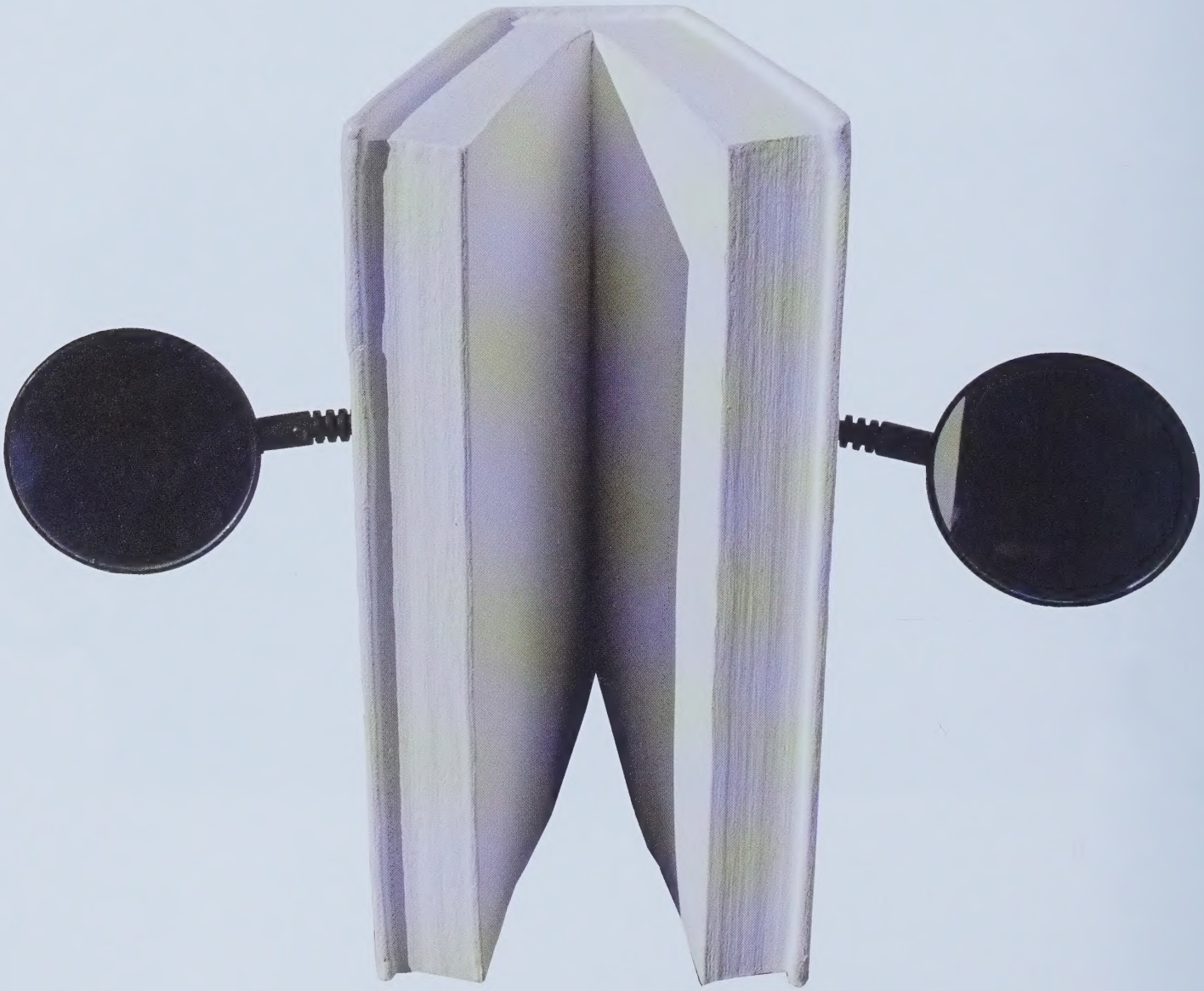
Tightening the Screws

Rebirth



Whichever Way You Turn

Squeezed



Hindsight

ARTIST BOOKS In creating my *Book-Objects* I deconstruct books, dismantle them and assemble whatever fragments remain into new composites. The opposite is true when I make Artist Books. Here I carefully plot, make thorough investigations and spend plenty of time mapping out concepts to build new volumes from scratch. Artist Books is a multi-faceted genre with many sub-categories being published for different reasons. One overriding principle, however, is a common denominator for most of these efforts. They are generally produced and brought to market by the artists who make them, with little or no interference by either dealers, critics or publishers.

The Artist Book has been utilized by many creative spirits as a cherished panoply, a private space if you will, where ideas can be freely developed. It is a gallery of sorts, with pages taking on the role of exhibition walls on which to communicate, put forth concerns and engage in a dialogue.

These published gems can take on a variety of forms. They run the gamut from expertly printed limited editions to one-of-a-kind handmade objects, to three-dimensional constructions, political manifestos, walk-in environments, or whatever strikes one's fancy. This unencumbered freedom has brought an impressive new vitality to book making, with interesting ideas challenging old traditions. The no-holds-barred attitude, however, has also had some questionable side effects, such as poor judgment, lack of craftsmanship and ill-conceived ideas. What may parade as an artist book often is without artistic merit and fails the label "book" as well. Not surprising, this tendency does exist in the arts in general: if you call it art it must be art. So it goes here: if you call it a book it must be book, no matter what.

But why is there so much attention paid to hand book making at this time? After all, the electronic media, via a website or a blog, offer many of the same advantages to present unencumbered ideas to a much larger audience than that of a few copies of printed matter. The answer might be that artists make books today precisely because of the electronic media. The staggering

possibilities, the unimaginable vastness of the internet can be intimidating. So is the lack of tactile or physical presence. Unlike a book, electronically generated objects inhabit no obvious space. They appear mysteriously into our field of vision and similarly vanish quite as suddenly with the touch of a keyboard. It simply may be that a great number of creative minds are traditionalists, who are attracted to physical involvement with a real object. That is why artists still paint, sculpt, draw and make books. The creation of a handmade book involves a multitude of dimensions which are not answered by typing a code into a computer. The bookshelf of the virtual world does not offer the thrill of holding a finely crafted piece of work to closely examine it, feel it or smell it. Or even blow the dust off it. In some ways the proliferation of artist books can be attributed to a reaction to the passivity of the electronic dialogue. Paradoxically, at the same time the electronic environment forms the infrastructure for the digital chatter that offers those fabulous tools and enormous resources to the artist book maker.

Computers, printers, scanners, copiers, etc., - the entire digital matrix - is suddenly at everyone's disposal. Versatile software allows for high quality renditions. Given the proper know-how it is possible to produce skillful layouts, be a typographer and digitally print masterful editions on archival paper that challenge the standards of the old guard. With Google at our fingertips one can be an expert author, skillful researcher and fact checker of highly complex subject matter.

The making of an artist book is very much the same as developing any other artwork. Foremost there are the creative impulses, which are the core of all artistic undertakings. They emerge from a desire to communicate. It is an evolving process, at times laborious, at other times spontaneous. The need to express can be stimulated by outside events or simply as an internal dialogue of questioning. It is a testing of reality, of embracing fantasy, of measuring relationships, both visual as well as emotional. Investigating the obvious against the speculative becomes a way of delivering fragments

from our innermost being. Like all other things in life, the creative process does not happen in a vacuum. Issues, concerns and questions which occupy our waking hours find their way into the labyrinth of our subconscious. They re-emerge, sometimes years later, surprising and without specific reason, as expressions in our artistic endeavors. The need to express something is followed by plotting out mechanisms to best translate an imagined idea into a suitable form.

The format we choose should enhance the original concept and, we hope, support what the imagination envisions. When technique and creative impulse work hand in hand we usually find a workable solution. For my artist books I rely to a large degree on traditional methods. These are all part of my vocabulary: letterpress printing, handset type, original print techniques such as wood cuts or linoleum blocks, etchings, archival papers and intricate bindings. This does not exclude new processes or whatever methods are suitable to enhance what I want to express. My books are typically produced in limited editions of 10 to 50 copies. Most of them have an experimental aspect as part of their structure. I invite the viewer to participate and share the creative dimension of a piece. Experiencing my books requires a hands-on attitude. Touching, folding and manipulating components are integral parts of "reading" the story.

W. P.

Variation using
four vertical bands
created by two prints.
Die-cut opening showing
underlying sheets.

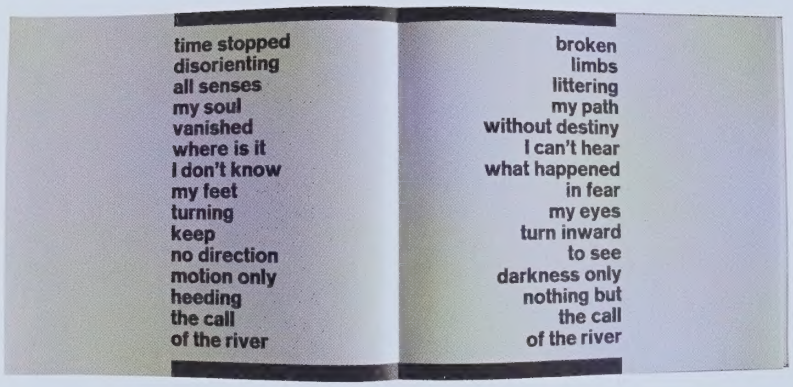
Liber Mobile was inspired by the writings of Marshall McLuhan. In the 1960s he observed a shift away from print culture towards the electronic media, which ultimately turned into today's digital age. This development did signal the end of what McLuhan called the typographic man. According to McLuhan, reading, i.e. the alphabet, is no longer the primary conduit of communication; the new media rely exclusively on visual and sound effects. This then was the setting for this exploratory work. It was a deliberate choice to base the language, or the "story," on typographic shapes.

In massive circular currents illegible letterforms create text-like rhythms, simulating interpretive content, suggesting legibility. However it is simply an interaction of form and color. At best it is a hint at a change of process, an ode to a historic past. The piece has six two-sided prints which are scored and die-cut.

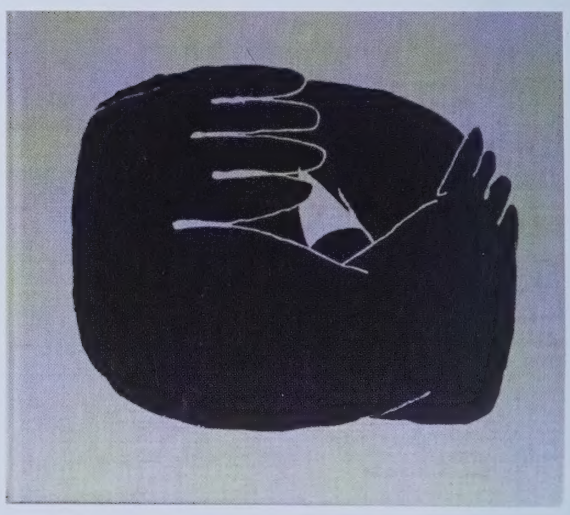
The underlying grid has four vertical sections and allows for three horizontal bands of equal size. From the outset *Liber Mobile* was thought of as a hands-on book, with the reader actively engaged in developing visual stories.

The documented variations, all based on the same six prints, are a sampling of the potential involvement this experimental book can offer.

Cover of *Liber Mobile.*

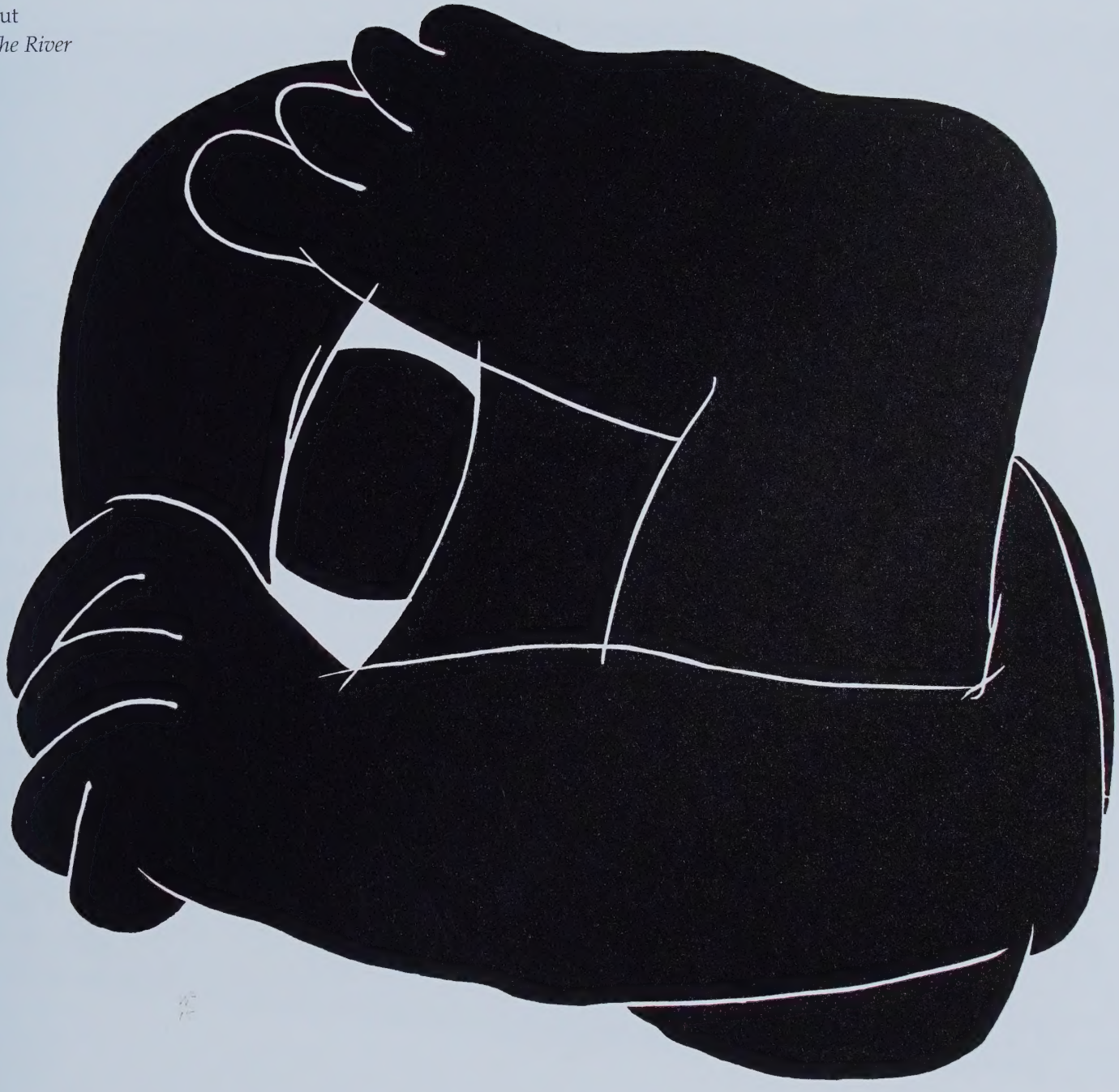


The River Structured as a long accordion fold (fully extended it measures 26 1/2 feet), the book echoes the rhythm and flow of a river, which is a central part of the story. The mental anguish and entrapment expressed in the text is reinforced by the cagelike layout of the typography. Its somber heaviness is only outdone by the dark, bold woodcuts which depict confusion and fear. *The River* has only been issued in a small test series (No. I - X) and is identified as such. Each book is printed on different paper and the binding cloth also varies from copy to copy. The final edition is planned to consist of 50 copies.



Above:
Page spread
Below:
Cover of *The River*

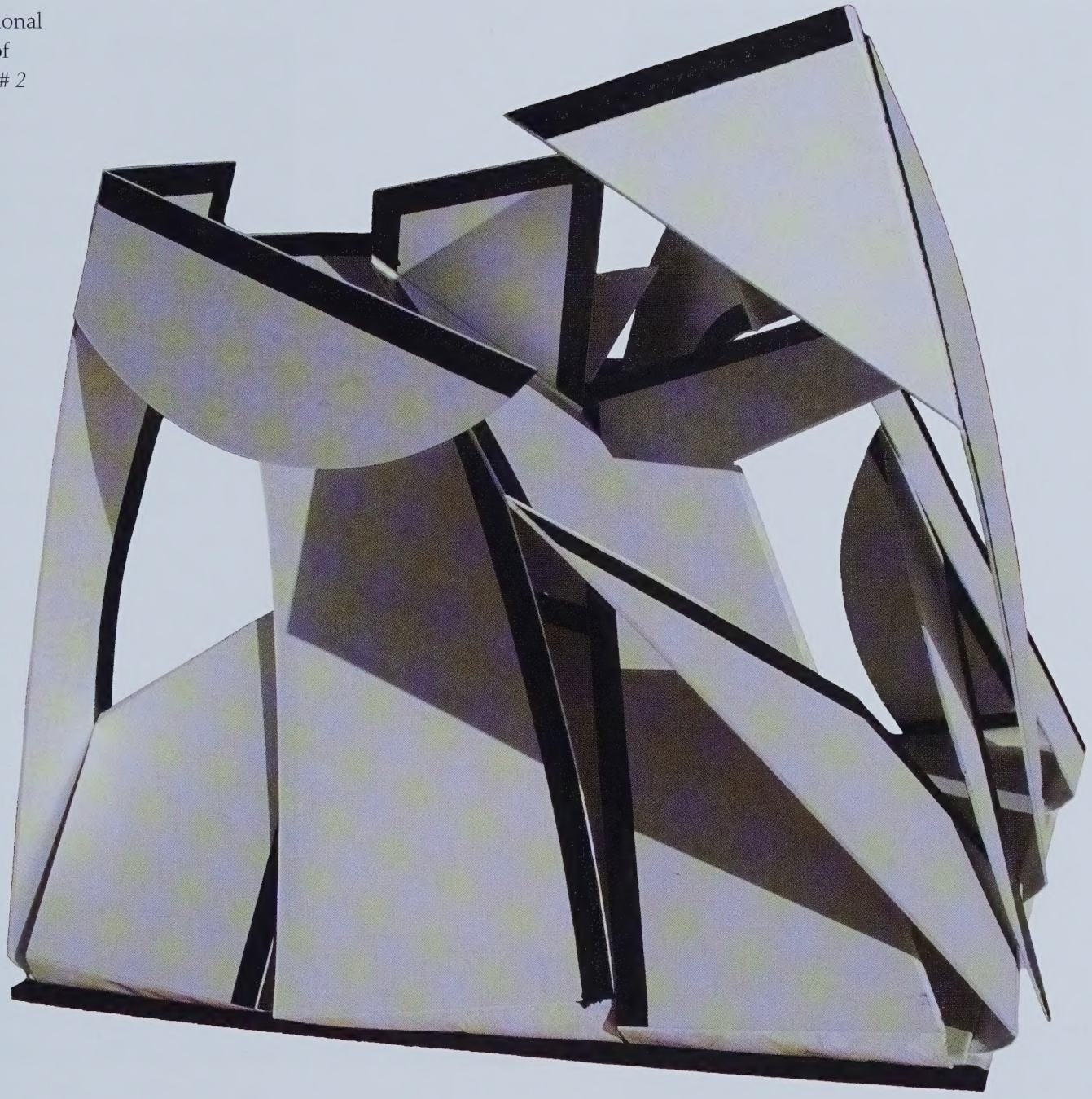
Woodcut
from *The River*



Fold-Out Book # 2 At first glance this piece seems to test the physical boundaries of what is considered a book. But with closer examination it is possible to discover a semblance of the traditional structure of a codex, where elements are anchored in a binding, where pages can be turned.
Even if there is no longer a fixed linear sequence dictating how a specific idea or story should unfold, there are still basic guidelines for how to read this book, if only imposed by the limits of its folds, their pliability and their structure. Here the interaction is based on a visual language and on the experience of manipulating elements into different settings. The emotional feedback is derived not only by observation, but by the entire range of tactile and sensory perceptions.

Three part composition of *Fold-Out Book # 2*

Three dimensional
arrangement of
Fold-Out Book # 2



Above: Three dimensional book *Out of the Sky*

Right: Sketch for *Out of the Sky* woodcut

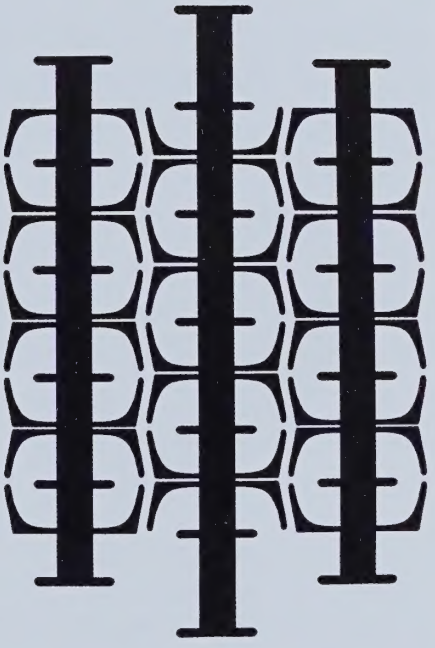
Out of the Sky · 9/11 As I witnessed the second plane hit the World Trade Center and watched in horror as the two towers collapsed the question was not if, but when I would express my sense of anguish to commemorate this horrendous event. Almost immediately after the attack I started making notes, sketching out possible forms this tribute might take. Being both a sculptor and a printmaker, I kept developing ideas in the form of a sculpture, as well as a graphic document. Since one did not exclude the other I kept pursuing a combination of both. Thus *Out of the Sky* evolved into a book with a sculptural component, or a sculpture in the form of a book. I tried to convey in countless drawings the panic and horror the victims must have endured as they fell to their death amongst the debris of the collapsing buildings. What finally emerged was a sketch for two large woodcuts in the shape of the towers of the World Trade Center. Each tower has seven segments which are stacked over a support structure. To package the towers, an accompanying text component and the structural elements I designed a complex triple box. The remnants of the piece rest in its container, its urn, until they are resurrected to commemorate the fallen victims.

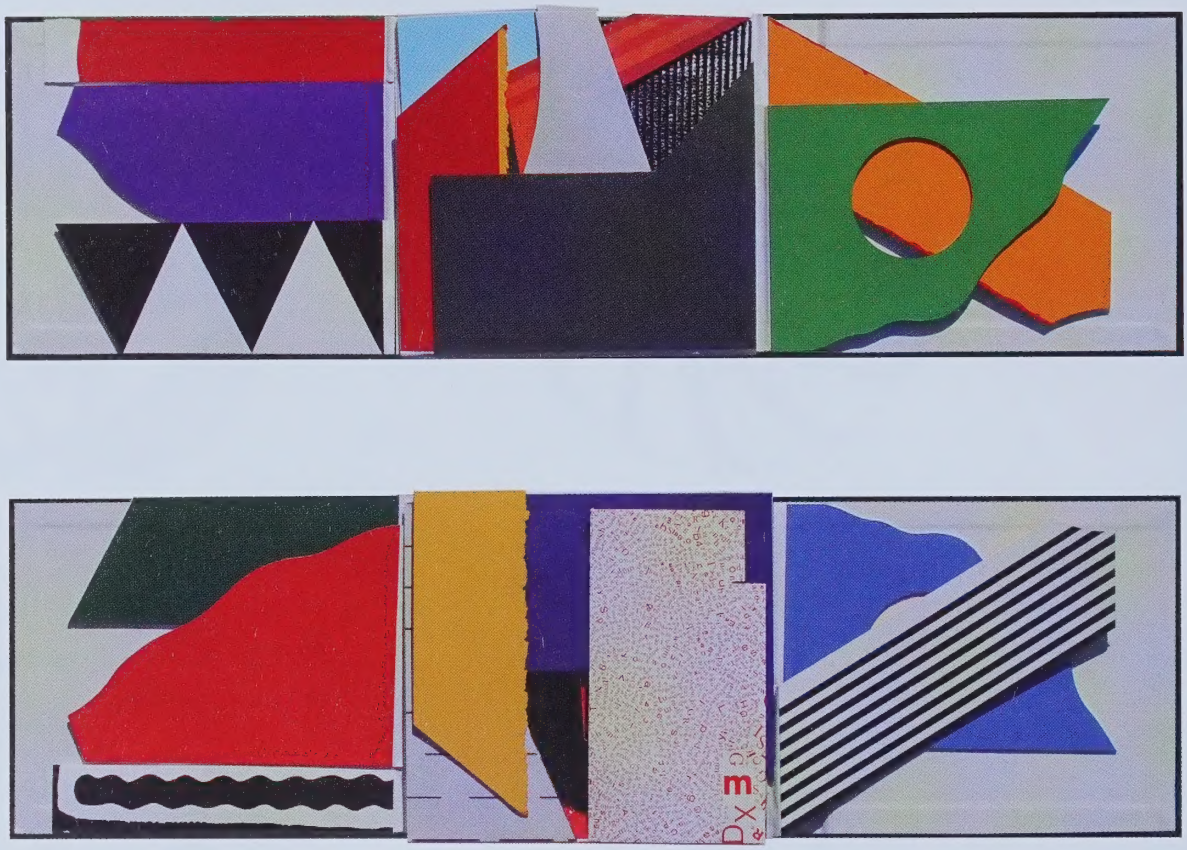
Alphabeticum is a portfolio of typographic experiments spanning a period of more than four decades, with the bulk of the designs dating back to the early sixties. Since design software, or even the personal computer, did not exist at the time, most of the images were developed with rudimentary tools such as tracing paper, a stat machine, letterpress printing or plain rendering. Many of the pieces were carved into linoleum and enhanced by exploratory printing techniques. Originally conceived as visual aids for a design course, these pieces soon found their way into the international design literature. After an exhibition by the education department of the Museum of Modern Art in New York firmly established the educational credentials of these typographic markers, they promptly fell into oblivion, only to be quite recently rediscovered. Twenty-three of the original ninety or so experiments were selected for *Alphabeticum*. The publication was completed with three new designs, an introduction page and two index sheets.

a
A lower case Cooper a, enlarged and cut in linoleum, begins this series
B
B is modeled after Felix Eurobold, conceived as a pen and ink drawing
c
The contrasting values of Bodoni are at the core of experiment number three
D
This image, a linocut, is a progression of enlarged negative spaces around a Helvetica Bold D
e
The only straight line in a Garamond e forms the basis for this swirling form cut in linoleum
f
Onyx is the type style of this altered letter, randomly printed in a pattern
g
Expression and boldness of Thorowgood Italic are at work in this arrangement
H
Various sizes and styles of Helvetica are integrated in this Mondrian-like grid
i
This tour-de force began by inking a 72' Ruskerville 1 red and black, hand stamping it 625 times
j
Eighteen characters are focused on a single dot of this Century Schoolbook lower case j
k
A modified Franz Kadenz k, cut into linoleum, printed to align as a square, forms this symbol
L
This letter belongs to the Gerrick y family; the maze-like configuration is a drawing
M
Based on Standard Bold Extended this form explores positive-negative contrasts in a linoleum cut

One of two index pages of *Alphabeticum*

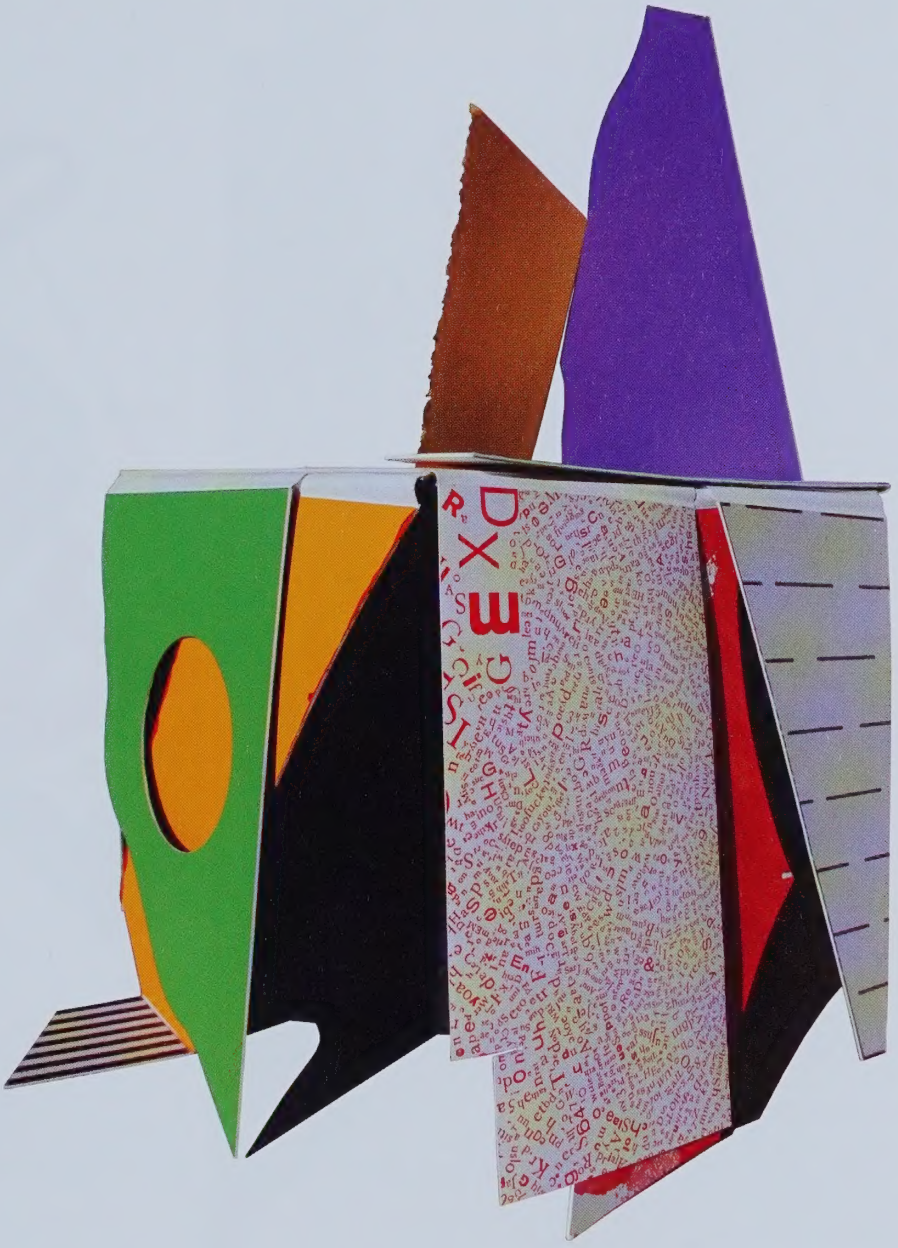
Left and
this page:
a sampling of
designs from
Alphabeticum





Two dimensional
variations with
Fold-Out Book #1

Fold-Out Book # 1 I wanted to develop a book-like vehicle to express my interest in visual and sensory experiences. Coming from the vantage point of a sculptor, it was important to me that the piece should have a three-dimensional potential. The aspect of turning and the element of "space and time" were necessary considerations.
The interaction of color, form and texture are primary concerns in reading this book. While experimenting with this piece the reader can explore the correlation of the various elements, either flat or by constructing three-dimensional configurations.
Each variation can convey a substantially different mood. The emotional content is not transmitted by words, but by observing juxtapositions of color and spatial relationships. Here reading is turned into bursts of manipulating, arranging, feeling and touching.

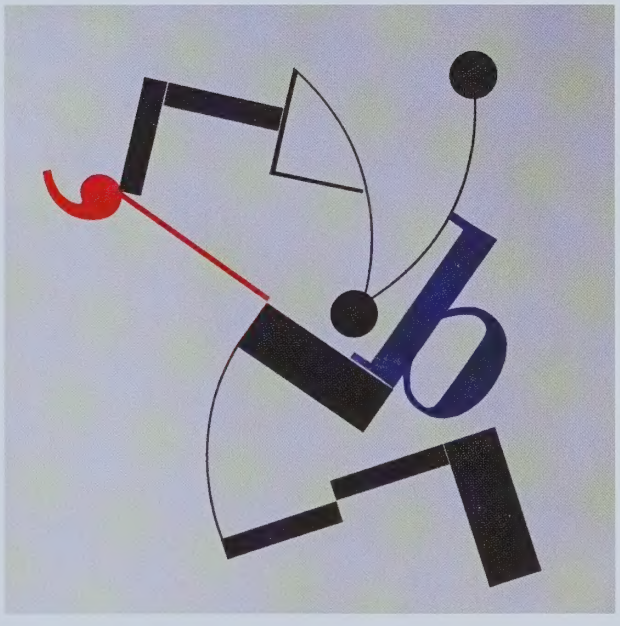


Sculptural construction with *Fold-Out Book # 1*

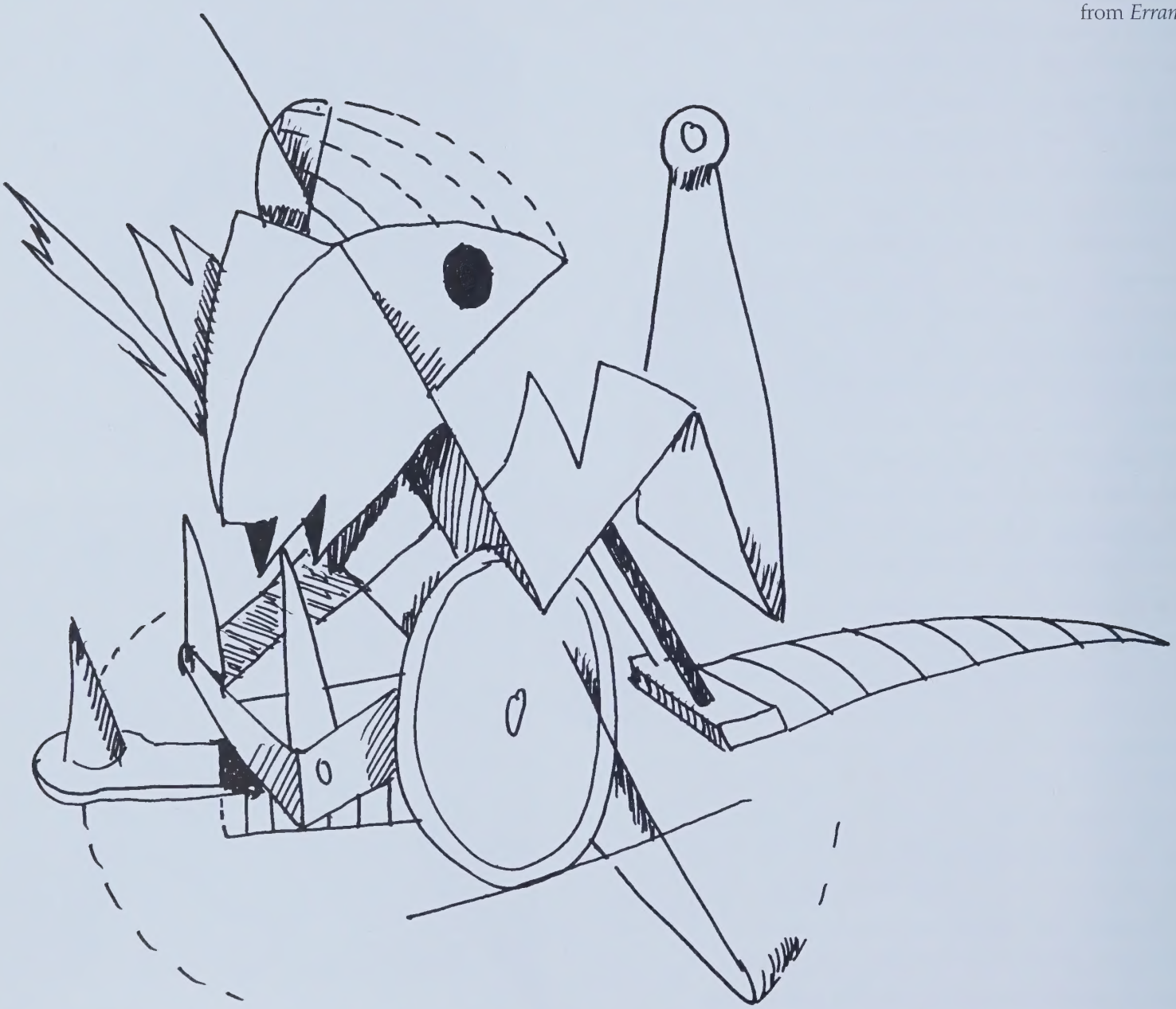
Top:
One of three
Flexagons that spell
Abracadabra.

On the right:
Pages of
letters A and b

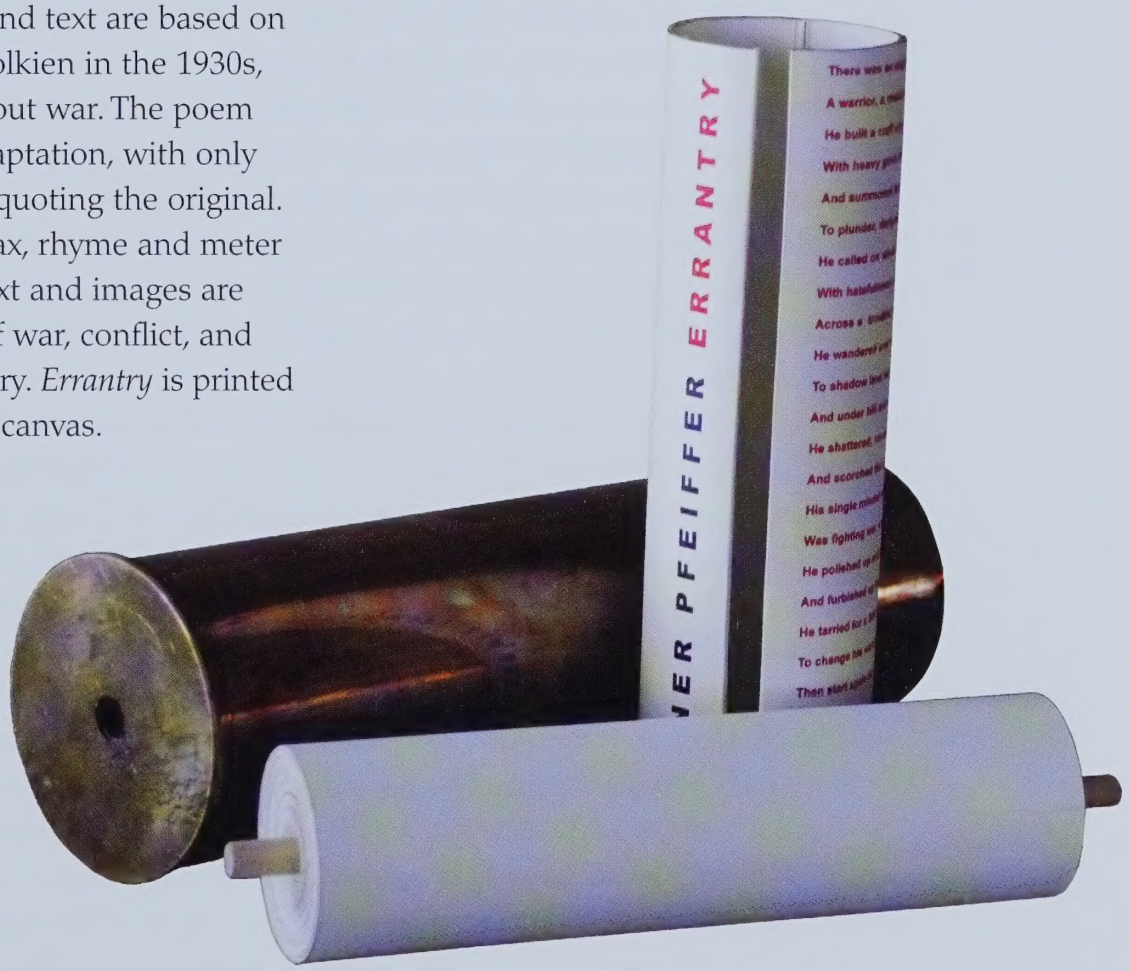
Abracadabra is a book about magic. Not the illusory trickery of a conjuror, but the magic of an artist's work. It is an homage to N.H. Werkman, the Dutch printer, graphic artist, painter and resistance fighter, who was executed by the Nazis in the waning days of WW II. In particular it is a recognition of his inventive typographic works, his "drucksels," as he called them. These unusual pieces have a playful directness that combines the linguistic code of letterforms with the distinct formality of geometry and color. Werkman's approach was to change the sequence of how letterpress printing is usually done, when ink is applied to the printing form and then paper is placed on top of it. He arranged the paper in the press bed and visually guided the inked forms into position, allowing for superior control in composing images. It is a kind of stamping process using the printing press. By adopting Werkman's technique I developed a series of pages based on the characters which spell out the word Abracadabra. In order the embrace the illusionary realm with which the word is associated, I mounted the pages into three Flexagon structures; they magically appear and disappear by simply folding and flexing a piece of paper.



Drawing detail
from *Errantry*



Errantry is a scroll inspired by a 16th-century graphic cycle called *Emperor Maximilian's Triumphant Procession*. One of the dominant features in this document is the militant nature of many of the characters depicted, as well as their posture in parading their arms on horse, by carriage or on foot. It is this aggressive stance that led to the drawings that are at the core of *Errantry*. The title and text are based on a poem written by J.R.R. Tolkien in the 1930s, thought by many to be about war. The poem used in this scroll is an adaptation, with only two or three lines directly quoting the original. What is similar is the syntax, rhyme and meter of Tolkien's writing. The text and images are set against a chronology of war, conflict, and genocide in the 20th century. *Errantry* is printed digitally on a 27-foot long canvas.



Shell casing, scroll cover and rolled-up *Errantry* scroll

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES Werner Pfeiffer was born in 1937 in Stuttgart in the southwestern part of Germany. He studied at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in his home town. In 1961 he emigrated to the United States. Initially he was active as a designer and art director on a variety of projects. In this capacity he received many citations and awards from the New York Art Directors Club, the New York Type Directors Club, the New York Society of Illustrators, and the American Institute of Graphic Arts. His design work has been widely published in the international design literature in magazines such as *Graphis, Gebrauchsgrafik, Print, Modern Publicity* and *Art Direction*. In 1969 he was appointed Professor of Art at Pratt Institute in New York. At the same time he assumed the position of director of the Pratt Adlib Press, a publishing venture of the Department of Graphic Art. In the late 1960s he started to concentrate on his own work as sculptor, printmaker and painter. Recently he moved to Red Hook, a small community in the mid-Hudson River region in New York State.

His books, collages, drawings, prints, paintings and sculptures have been shown internationally in more than 100 group exhibitions and in more than 70 solo shows in countries such as Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Israel, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States. His work is represented in many private collections and institutions here and abroad.

Over the years he has received numerous public sculpture commissions from the State of Connecticut, the Federal Government of Germany, the State of Niedersachsen in Germany and the State of Massachusetts. Commissions in the private sector include projects for corporations such as Baxter International, Chemical Bank, Zürich, the Hartford Insurance Group, Lackwerke Wülfling, Daimler-Benz Credit Corp./USA and *The Hartford Courant*, a part of the Time Mirror Group.

Institutions having acquired Werner Pfeiffer's work:
The Art Institute in Chicago, the Boston Museum of Fine Art, Bowdoin College, Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie, Geneva, the Brooklyn Museum, the Boston Athenaeum, the Boston Public Library, Brown University, Buchmuseum Dresden, Columbia University, Connecticut College, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Delaware University, Delaware Museum, the Getty Research Center, the Grolier Club, the Guggenheim Museum, Harvard University, Klingspor Museum, Germany, the Library of Congress, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Maryland Institute College of Art, McGill University, Middlebury College, Mills College, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, National Museum in Stockholm, New York Public Library, New York University, the Ostgotlands Museum, Sweden, Otis Design Center, Pratt Institute, Princeton University, RISD Museum, Rhode Island University, Rochester Institute of Technology, Sackner Archive, Skidmore College, Smith College, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Städtische Galerie Stuttgart, Germany, Stanford University, Swarthmore College, Temple University, the Toledo Museum of Art, Trinity College, University of the Arts, Philadelphia, University of California at Los Angeles, University of Connecticut, University of Maryland, University of Pennsylvania, University of Toronto, University of Vermont, Vassar College, Wellesley College, Wells College, Wesleyan University, Williams College, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart, the Whitney Museum of American Art and Yale University.

CHECKLIST

ALL DIMENSIONS ARE GIVEN IN INCHES • HEIGHT X WIDTH X DEPTH

Book Objects

Attack Machine
12 x 8 1/2 x 6 1/2 2008
open book with clock movement and stones

Bait
15 1/2 x 10 x 3 1995
book, screws, bait pouch and crumpled pages

Bolted Shut
11 x 8 1/4 x 2 1993
book, wooden bolt, bolt loops, type fragments

Book with Bite
12 x 8 1/2 x 1 1/2 2008
open book with plaster cast bite

Breakthrough
15 1/4 x 10 x 4 1993
open book with wooden wedges

Broken Markers
16 x 10 1/4 x 3 1995
open book, painted stick coil, rubber sleeve

Censored Nail Book
18 3/4 x 11 1/4 x 4 1981
open book with nails plus red paint

Difficult Chapter
15 1/4 x 10 x 5 1992
open book with rope and painted spikes

Difficult to Fit
9 x 6 1/2 x 9 1992
book with handle and tooth-picks

Explosive Subject
9 1/4 x 6 1/2 x 4 1/2 1992
book with bullets placed on pillow

Foot Notes
17 1/2 x 10 1/2 x 4 1981
open book, sardine can, spring, bolt

Flushed
13 x 9 1/2 x 1 1993
open book with built-in drain

Forcing the Issue
15 x 11 1/2 x 6 1992
cut book with c-clamps, red paint

Funnel
12 1/2 x 8 1/2 x 7 1989
open book, funnel, shredded text

Hindsight
14 1/2 x 10 x 7 1/2 1995
partially opened book with rearview mirrors

Hot & Cold
16 1/4 x 10 x 5 1996
open book with faucet handles

Knotty Story # 2
16 x 10 x 3 1993
open book, pieces of rope tied in long knots

Literary Salvo
12 3/4 x 9 1/2 x 4 1994
open book, slingshot + stones covered in type fragments

Lost Measure
11 1/2 x 10 x 4 1981
open book, mirrored pyramid, glasses, ruler + bolt

Morality Switch
14 3/4 x 9 3/4 x 5 1992
open book, light switch + bulb covered with type fragments

Rebirth
11 1/2 x 7 1/2 x 4 1989
open book, birds nest + wedge covered with words

Removing the Evidence
14 x 9 1/2 x 5 1992
open book, cut pages with handles

Rope Book # 4
6 x 8 1/2 x 4 1/2 1989
book cut in three parts, rope

Rope Book # 8
8 x 9 x 5 1/2 1989
split book, rope, nail

Rope Book # 11
7 3/4 x 9v6 1993
split book with rope and nails

Rope Book # 12
7 x 9 x 5 1993
split book, rope on pedestal

Screw Books # 3
12 x 8 1/4 x 7 1981
three books plus eighteen screws

Sewn Up
16 x 11 1/2 x 3 1992
open book with sewn up pages

Sprouting Immorality
17 x 12 1/2 x 6 1/2 1981
open book with shredded text

Squeezed
10 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 6 1995
closed book with rope and plaster

Stainless Steel
12 1/4 x 10 1/2 x 3 1994
open book stabbed, knife, text page, cord, nail

Stone Book # 1
12 x 8 x 3 1995
torn book, curled pages,
stone, rope and nail

Story Line
11 x 8 1/4 x 2 1992
open book with type
covered rope

Strung Out
15 x 10 x 2 1994
open book, ripped
ripped pages, string

The Original Chip
13 1/4 x 12 x 3 1992
open book, electric cord,
plug, colored wires

Tightening the Screws
14 1/4 x 10 x 2 1992
open book, cut, wing nuts
plus plaster

Whichever Way You Turn
11 1/4 x 8 x 6 1995
open book, bundled pages,
spikes + holes

Writers Revenge
15 3/4 x 10 1/2 x 6 1/2 1995
open book, toilet paper
thumb tacks

You Can't Keep it Down
12 3/4 x 9 x 6 1/2 1992
open book with type
covered twigs

Artist Books

Liber Mobile
14 x 20
experimental book
published in 1967 by
the Pratt Adlib Press
edition 135

The River
accordion fold, 24 x 14
(unfolded 26 1/2' long)
published in 1996 by
Flat Rock Press
test edition numbered I - X

Fold Out Book # 1
experimental book
with fold-out leaves,
9 x 9 x 1 closed
27 x 27 when fully
extended
published in 2000 by
Pear Whistle Press
edition 10

Alphabeticum
portfolio of typographic
experiments
13 x 13 x 1
published in 2006 by
Pear Whistle Press
edition 52 copies

Out of the Sky • 9/11
three dimensional book
13 x 13 x 5 closed
72 x 63 x 13 fully set up
published in 2006 by
Pear Whistle Press
edition 52 copies

Fold Out Book # 2
experimental book
with fold out leaves
9 x 9 x 1 closed
27 x 25 fully extended
published in 2006 by
Pearwhistel Press
edition 20 copies

Abracadabra
homage to N.H. Werkman,
typographic experiments
10 x 10 x 1
published in 2007 by
Pear Whistle Press
edition 52 copies

Errantry
27' long scroll
in casing
4 dia. x 11
published in 2008 by
Pear Whistle Press
edition 52 copies

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS Putting together an exhibition or a catalogue is rarely the undertaking of one person. As with most of our endeavors we rely on help and input from others, and I am indebted to many individuals who helped make this project happen.

First and foremost are the principle curators of the rare book collections at the four participating institutions: Martin Antonetti at Smith College, Lynne Farrington at the University of Pennsylvania, Richard Landon at the University of Toronto, and Katherine Reagan at Cornell University. Their commitment and support established the framework for this project. Their colleagues also were most helpful in achieving the many details which are necessary in assembling both the exhibit as well as the catalogue. Martin Antonetti undertook the special task of writing a most compelling introduction to this publication; thank you so much.

At Smith, Barbara Blumenthal very generously edited and proofread the many texts to keep the inevitable typos at bay, and together with Karen Kukil, she served as midwife for the initial venue of this exhibition. Linda Joy of the University of Toronto deserves special praise for her expertise and dedication. Without the witty insights of Daniel Traister at Penn many of the underlying connections might never have happened. Through her 'magic design laboratory' Andrea Gottschalk is capable of injecting energy into any exhibition. Special thanks are due to H. Carton Rogers, Adela Smith, David Toccafondi and Gilbert L. Mathews, Esq.

And a final note of appreciation for Roberta Zonghi, who was one of the original catalysts to start this venture, and for Lucille Poirier for putting together this catalogue.

This exhibition was curated by the artist
and is scheduled
at the following institutions:

Neilson Library Book Arts Gallery &
Mortimer Rare Book Room
Smith College
Northampton / MA 01060
April 1 - July 31, 2008

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
University of Toronto
120 St George Street
Toronto / Ontario
Canada M5S 1A5
February - April 2009

University of Pennsylvania Libraries
Kamin Gallery
First Floor, Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center
3420 Walnut Street
Philadelphia / PA 19104-6202
September 2009 - February 2010

Cornell University Library
Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections
Hirshland Gallery
Carl A. Kroch Library
Ithaca / NY 14853
October 2010 - February 2011

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